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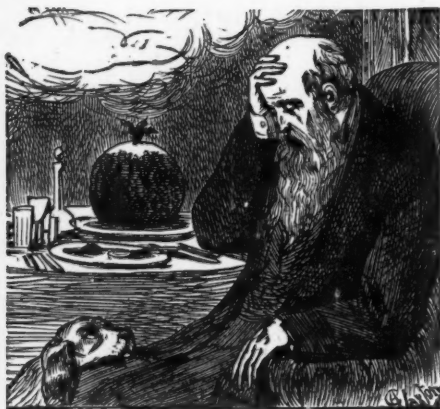
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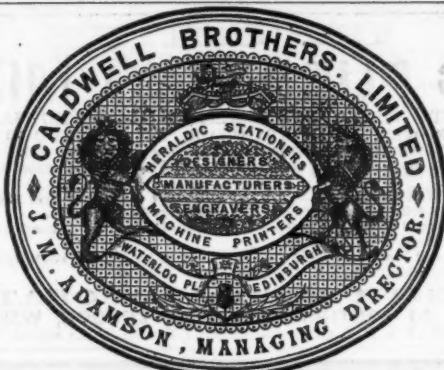
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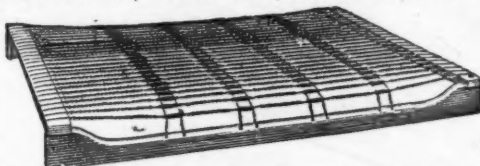
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LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE.

DECEMBER 1882.

Thicker than Water.

BY JAMES PAYN, AUTHOR OF 'BY PROXY,' 'HIGH SPIRITS,' &C.

CHAPTER V.

THE OFFER OF MARRIAGE.

IT seems to have escaped the notice of those social teachers who are so good as to point out to their fellow-creatures how to get on in the world, how great a factor in that matter, sometimes for good, more often for evil, is rapidity of action caused by the hatred of suspense. It is not exactly impatience, the 'raw haste' which the poet describes as 'half sister to delay,' but the desire to know the worst or the best. Though most frequently found in impulsive natures, it is not peculiar to them. One of the most methodical men of his time, and the most successful in his calling of all time, possessed this attribute in excess. On the one hand it caused him never to lose an opportunity: he 'caught the skirts of happy chance' throughout his life; but on the other he often renounced great gains in order to get a matter settled and off his mind.

Mrs. Beckett, notwithstanding her boasted experience of life, had never learnt to be patient; she had always acted more or less upon impulse, and her vast wealth had increased this tendency. Royal personages do not write when they have a fancy for anything; they telegraph for it, or send a special messenger. We read of Louis XIV., that on one occasion 'he had almost to wait,' but the catastrophe itself was averted.

No sooner had her two visitors departed, than the widow was consumed with a desire to despatch that letter to the younger of them of which she had spoken to him. 'In the meantime I will write to you,' she had said, not because she had found speaking difficult, but the getting an answer from him. She felt that he had stood on his guard and parried her thrusts, without absolutely becoming her antagonist. He had been very careful not to hurt her feelings, whereas if he had quite made up his mind to reject her advances, he might have repelled them with a word or two, such as she could have scarcely blamed him for using in self-defence. It was plain to her that he was in a state of indecision: on the one hand well disposed for a life of ease and opulence; on the other, sensitive to the ridicule that would attach to him for the price he would have to pay for it. She did not dream of having a rival in her affections; she had never heard a whisper of such a thing; that view of the case did not occur to her at all, perhaps because she was secretly conscious that affection—on his side at least—was not much concerned in the matter. She knew that Edgar liked her, and persuaded herself that his liking, when he came to know the sacrifices she was prepared to make for him, would turn to love. But in the meantime she could hardly write of the sacrifices; she could not say, 'If you marry me I will settle this and that upon you absolutely, and make you entirely independent of me.' She was secretly conscious that he had exaggerated his tendency to extravagance and his dislike to all financial control, in order to dissuade her from her purpose; but she ignored it. Her Edgar, if he would be hers, should be as extravagant as he pleased, and have nothing to complain of in the way of restriction. She had fallen over head and ears in love with him.

There was certainly some disparity in their ages, and that on the wrong side; but Edgar looked old for his years while she looked young, and, what was more, felt so. She had had troubles, severe ones, but they had not broken her spirit; her capacity for affection was as great as ever. In her first marriage she had not looked for love; in her second she had looked in vain for it. It was still, as it were, owed to her, and there was yet time to enjoy it; and even if it were not thoroughly reciprocated, might not her third union be as happy as her first, where reciprocity had also been wanting, though in that case, from her own side? At the worst she was convinced, and not without reason, that Edgar Dornay would never treat her ill. For her friends she had arguments enough

for taking this step. With her enormous fortune she felt the need of a protector and adviser, &c.; she knew their remonstrances would not be very strong; and as for her enemies, she could afford to defy or to despise them. But the unfolding of her intentions to Edgar himself was a very different matter. Even the simple 'yes' or 'no' required from the blushing maiden whose hand has been asked in marriage, is said to be an embarrassing affair. Conceive then what a task lay before the widow, who was herself about to put the question instead of answering it! And she had not even the excuse of a leap-year. It was easy enough to begin 'My dear Edgar,' and to end 'Yours faithfully, Kate Beckett;' the difficulty lay in the intermediate matter.

A snow-storm of torn-up letters went on in the widow's boudoir before she could compose one to her mind; if it was not a pretty letter after all, that may be set down to the necessity of the case; under the circumstances it was perhaps as good a one as could have been written.

'My dear Edgar,—If we had not been interrupted this morning, I had made up my mind to speak to you upon a certain subject about which—for suspense in this matter is intolerable to me—I am now compelled to write. It is a subject so very delicate and difficult for me to touch upon, that I should not venture to do so but for the confidence I feel that I am not only addressing a man of honour, who will respect my secret, but a man of feeling, who will understand what it costs me to reveal it.'

The above sentence was not composed in a hurry. Even when it was written she was dissatisfied with it. She thought the expression 'costs' might remind him inopportunely of her money. 'It is not usual for ladies to write to gentlemen upon such a topic; my very housemaid would hesitate to give to the young man with whom she "keeps company" that fateful ring (with O. K. K. B. W. P. on it), which she accepts from him with such alacrity; it is a woman's province to wait for her wooer. Unhappily I do not share the common lot. My position is an exceptional one. If I am so fortunate as to have won the affections of an honourable man, certain considerations would seal his lips; and the more worthy he is of being beloved the more closely they would seal them. Ever since I have known you, Edgar, I have been a happier woman' (perhaps it was fortunate that their acquaintance had not been a prolonged one; it would have been *mal à propos* under the circumstances to remind him that she had known him from his child-

hood). 'Your companionship has cheered me; your intelligence has delighted my mind; and above all your heart, or so I have flattered myself, has beaten responsively to mine. Your behaviour of late, and especially to-day, leads me to believe that a mistaken sense of independence may have kept you silent upon a matter in which your happiness may be, as mine most certainly is, concerned. The inequality of our fortunes may, to one of your sensitive nature, have put a padlock on your tongue. That is foolish, Edgar, for there is an inequality of age between us—ten years or more, I fear' (it was nearer twenty)—'which if this matter were one of bargain, which Heaven forbid, might fairly be written off against it. If a false pride, or an unfounded mistrust, prevents your speaking to me of what is in your heart, I entreat you for both our sakes to discard them. If, on the other hand, I have deceived myself, it is better that I should be undeceived. Your generous heart will forgive a fond and foolish woman who has mistaken regard for love, and a natural kindness of heart for a particular inclination.

'Yours faithfully,

'KATE BECKETT.'

Then came the postscript, which, though it would be cynical to say it contained the pith of the matter, was of considerable importance. 'Whatever may be your reply to this, I trust you will accept the inclosed; if not as an earnest of the many offices of loving-kindness I hope to do for you, then as a small testimony of what at all events will be a lifelong friendship. I will only add that instead of being five hundred I wish it were five thousand.'

Having concluded this remarkable composition, it seemed to the writer that every moment it lay on her table or even in the post-office was lost time; the possibility of the Sunday intervening before Edgar could hear from her was a terrible thought; so she sent the note by hand.

'Any answer, me lady?' inquired the tall footman to whom its custody was entrusted.

That she expected an answer we may well imagine, and it was not without an inward struggle that she replied, 'No; you need only leave the letter;' she would in truth have liked the man to have waited in the hall of the Aglaia Club for her correspondent's reply.

When the letter had gone she half regretted not having added another postscript, 'Please acknowledge cheque;' not that she was solicitous about its safety, but that it would have necessitated an

immediate response. Nor was this wholly owing to impatience of suspense. If she did not know quite as much about Mr. Edgar Dornay as she thought she did, she was well aware that he was a man of impulse, and that her best chance of carrying his somewhat slackly defended heart was by a *coup de main*.

CHAPTER VI.

TWO TO ONE.

THE withdrawal of Mrs. Beckett to her boudoir was a matter of some surprise to Miss Marvon, for it was not the custom of the elder lady thus to seclude herself. She did not much care for general society, of which she had seen enough and to spare, but she liked companionship, and especially that of her young friend. It seemed, therefore, incumbent on her to offer some sort of explanation for her late seclusion.

‘I have been writing some letters, my dear,’ she said; which was true enough if twenty copies of one letter constitute a plural.

‘Could I not have helped you, dear Mrs. Beckett?’

‘Well, no; I don’t think you could, my dear.’

There was a tinge of red in the widow’s cheek as she said so, and also a faint smile on her lip, for she was not without some sense of humour. ‘Would it be indiscreet to inquire what you and Mr. Ralph were talking about all that time in the conservatory?’

It was Mary’s turn to blush now.

‘Well, among other things, he was eloquent upon the language of flowers.’

‘Indeed,’ said the widow, smiling. ‘I must take more care of you, Mary. I had no idea that you had made an impression in that quarter.’

‘Nor I,’ answered the other drily.

‘I am glad you do not take his attentions very seriously, for I am afraid Mr. Ralph is rather a butterfly. However, no one can deny that he is very agreeable, though he always rather reminds me of the poet of whom it was said that he could write lines to a broomstick. He is so very enthusiastic about everything, and at the shortest possible notice.’

Mary, who had been always careful to evince no personal hostility to Uncle Ralph for the very reason she had given to him, was now more chary of her censure than ever. She only smiled adhesion to her companion's sentiments.

'How Charley hates him !' continued the widow. 'It is such a pity.'

'It is a pity, at all events, that he shows it so,' observed Mary.

'No doubt. A young man who has his way to make in the world should not make himself enemies.'

'Still, Mr. Ralph Dornay tried to snub him.'

'True. And, as you say, "tried" without altogether succeeding in it. Charley has a cool, quiet way with him, which I have often reprov'd, but which I confess not a little tickles me. In a Minister of State it would be admirable, but in a young Government clerk it is very impertinent. What an immense difference social position makes ! Supposing a young man—I don't say Charley, but one like Charley——'

'Upon my word, dear Mrs. Beckett,' interrupted Mary, laughing, 'I don't believe there is one.'

'I am glad to hear you say so, my dear,' said the widow significantly.

'Oh, I didn't mean anything so very much in his favour,' answered Mary quietly ; 'we were talking of his cool ways. But I am interrupting you ; you were supposing a young man.'

'Yes ; suppose a young man, I was about to say, equal to Charley in intelligence, though in another line, who should suddenly exchange a moderate position for one of great wealth, what a splendid future would lie before him !'

Mary gave a little shrug of her shoulders.

'That depends, my dear Mrs. Beckett. Of course, as you have just said, his liveliness would pass for wit, and his talents for genius ; but the motive for exerting himself would be taken from him. Being in the lap of luxury, there is a temptation to sit there, and take what the gods provide one in a golden spoon.'

'Yet it would surely be a spur to his ambition to feel that with the advantages he has become possessed of almost anything would be within his grasp. In a man of moderate means, however able, the sense of the impossibility of success crushes endeavour. In a general way, you know, I am rather a sentimental person, but, for the reason I have just given, I do not think that clever young men should marry penniless girls.'

'Perhaps not,' said Mary gravely. 'You presume, however, that the alternative is given them of marrying for money.'

'Let us say marrying money. Why should we say "for" money because a man marries a woman who happens to possess it? Of course there must be the alternative. If Charley, for instance, had had any chance of winning an heiress, I am not sure, my dear, notwithstanding my high opinion of you, that I should have recommended him to your attention.'

'Then I wish he had had the chance,' said Mary, smiling. She could speak lightly enough of Charley; but some one else had been brought to her mind by her companion's words, of whom she could not so speak. The thoughts of both ladies, without any mutual consciousness of the fact, had been dwelling on the same man. The case Mrs. Beckett had been supposing was that of Edgar Dornay; and it had suggested to Mary whether her encouragement of that young man's attentions might not be an act of selfishness which would smother an honourable ambition, and cut him off from possibilities of greatness. It was a very delicate scruple, for, beyond the recommendation of a change of colour in the decoration of Mrs. Beckett's boudoir, Mr. Edgar Dornay had at present effected no particular intellectual revolution, nor, indeed, accomplished anything which the world would not have willingly let die.

'I never denied that Charley had his faults, my dear,' continued Mrs. Beckett, forgetting her rôle as advocate of Charley's cause, and only using him as a perch from which to fly to the subject which was monopolising her mind; 'his prejudices, for example, are often as strong as they are groundless. I don't believe, for example, he likes Edgar himself one bit better than he likes his uncle.'

'I don't think he quite understands his character,' observed Mary, with a show of indifference.

'He doesn't give himself the trouble to study it,' said the widow vehemently.

'It's a great pity,' observed Mary gently.

'I call it abominable of him,' continued the widow. 'The way in which he jumped from his seat when our other visitors entered the room to-day, and murmured something about "another engagement," was too transparently indecent. One would have thought they had had the small-pox out upon them.'

'They did interrupt his story, however,' said Mary apologetically. Her sympathies were always 'retained for the defence,' and,

moreover, she was anxious to turn the conversation from its present topic. She loved to think about Edgar Dornay—indeed, she thought about him whether she would or no—quite as much as her companion, but, unlike her, she was averse to speak about him. ‘I confess I was very much interested about the giant at Letcombe Dottrel. What a curious person Mr. Paton must be!’

‘Curious is no word for him, my dear. He is as mad about some things as a March hare; only being so very rich he is only considered eccentric.’

‘But I have always heard he was very benevolent.’

‘Well, yes; except in one particular direction. In that respect he is like Howard the philanthropist, who liked everybody except his own flesh and blood.’

‘Why, I understood Mr. Paton had no relations!’

‘Nor has he any near ones. But he once had an only son. “A little more than kin, and less than kind,” should be the family motto, for they two hated one another like poison.’

‘How shocking!’

‘It was indeed; I don’t know who was to blame for it in the first instance; but the breach grew wider and wider, till there was no bridging it over. At last the son ran away with a young woman very inferior to him in social station—the village organist—which caused a dreadful scandal.’

‘That is the sort of marriage which the world is slowest to forgive,’ sighed Mary, thoughtfully. ‘I suppose the world is right, but it seems very hard.’

‘In this case its forgiveness was not required,’ observed the widow, drily, ‘for they were never married at all. For all that, however, young Henry Paton stuck to the girl in a certain fashion—not that he could have really loved her, for he ill-treated her, and, in the end, deserted her; but he would never marry anyone else. He declined to form an alliance which would have been at least respectable, and on which his father insisted as the basis of their reconciliation. And, last of all, he crowned his enormities (for I assure you they were not mere peccadilloes) by trying to put his father into a lunatic asylum, which he very nearly accomplished.’

‘What a terrible history!’ exclaimed the girl. ‘And is the young man dead?’

‘Yes. He was killed in some drunken brawl in New York, and mourned by no one except by his poor mother.’

‘She is alive, then?’

‘Yes; and as good a woman as ever breathed. Mr. Paton, too, to do him justice, is the kindest of husbands; but he has forbidden her ever to mention her son’s name to him. What was at first mere heat against him, in the end turned to hate, so that his very memory is loathsome to him. What is stranger than all, this vehemence of detestation has affected the old man’s general views of life. Naturally of a most tender and sympathising disposition, he will never admit the tie of blood as a motive for affection. He looks upon relations as humourists depict mothers-in-law, while, on the other hand, his great house is full of living objects of benevolence, not always chosen with good judgment. Charley called them, if you remember, “the Happy Family”—poets, painters, inventors, and all the intellectual tagrag and bobtail who are always on the look-out for money and a patron.’

‘How very curious! And do you know this Mr. Paton?’

‘A little. He had some acquaintance at one time’—here the widow pressed her lips together—‘with my second husband. Mr. Rennie has been his man of business for years, and your friend, Mrs. Sotheran, of course, is very intimate at Letcombe Hall, since she lives in the same parish.’

‘And yet she has never mentioned to me one word about Mr. Paton,’ said Mary; ‘I have only heard of him from others.’

‘How curious!—Thanks.’ This to the servant, who had just placed a letter in his mistress’s hand. A glance at the address was sufficient to tell her from whom it came. It was the one she had been expecting with such impatience, but she had certainly no right to complain upon the score of delay. It was not yet dinner time, and her own letter had not been despatched more than two hours. She argued favourably (from what she knew of Edgar’s character) from this prompt reply. At all events, she held in her hand the key of her future happiness, or, let us say, discontent, for misery would certainly be too strong a word.

The moment was a supreme one, but then she was not unaccustomed to such supreme moments. Moreover, as we get on in years, all moments (save that in which death is beckoning to some dear one, true and tried) become less supreme. There was a ‘catch’ in her breath, but her face showed nothing of the anxiety that consumed her. If it had done so, however, her companion would not have observed it. Her thoughts, attracted for the moment by the sad domestic history to which she had just been listening, had already reverted to more personal affairs—

not exactly her own affairs, though her own were bound up in them. Mary Marvon used a very rare—though, among women, a not unexampled—system of notation. With her Number One was *not* always first, and was sometimes nought. She had every reason to believe, short of an actual offer of marriage, that Edgar Dornay purposed to make her his wife. She had liked him—even, perhaps, what is called fallen in love with him—from the first, but she had kept that fact carefully locked up in her own heart. She had given him no sort of encouragement, but had behaved to him exactly as she behaved to Mrs. Beckett's other visitors; not, indeed, with the humility often used by persons in her position, for nature had not fitted her for the conventional rôle of a 'companion,' but certainly with no forward assurance. On the contrary, she had put a constraint upon herself when in his company, and replied to him whenever he had addressed her with studied reticence. He had pushed aside this veil with his own hands, had sought her out, though with no demonstration of manner, in her modest retirement, and had won her heart.

He was not, however, quite sure that he had won it, nor had she quite made up her mind to give it him. Her hesitation arose solely upon his own account. In one point of view—the most common one—she was without doubt a bad match for him. She could give him nothing but her love. Nay, as Mrs. Beckett had just been unconsciously pointing out, she might be not even a *plus* at all, but a *minus*. His union with her might take away from him certain opportunities. They did not present themselves to her in the precise form that they had appeared to her friend; she could not picture the man of her choice marrying for money, but she could understand that her poverty might be a check upon his advancement in life. His parents were dead, and he had no one but his own wishes to consult in the matter—unless Uncle Ralph might be considered in a paternal light, an idea which she rejected with some contempt. But this very freedom of choice increased her hesitation. It behoved her all the more not to take advantage of this uncontrolled attachment to his own hurt. What the world might say of it would be a very small thing to her in comparison with what her own conscience might say. It did not enter into her consideration at all—what Mrs. Beckett, on the other hand, saw very clearly—that Edgar Dornay was of that impulsive and indecisive nature which needs, above all others, alliance with a firm, unwavering one; that a wife such as Mary Marvon would, in fact, to a young gentleman of his incompleteness be 'the making

of him.' But, in spite of all her doubts, she had a secret conviction in her true heart that she could make him a happy man.

She was not so absolutely ignorant of human nature as to suppose this sort of love was reciprocated, but she believed that Edgar loved her as truly and unselfishly as man could do. It was most fortunate for her hostess that Mary was thus sunk in reflection, for with Edgar Dornay's letter in her hand Mrs. Beckett felt very unequal to conversation. If her young friend had looked up at that critical moment with the very natural observation, for example, 'Who is your correspondent?' one can hardly imagine what would have happened, though it is just possible, I fear, that she might have replied, 'Only a bill, dear,' with the most innocent smile in the world.

Before conversation was resumed, however, the dressing gong began to boom through the house, which afforded her an excuse for retreat with all the honours of truth.

CHAPTER VII.

A FOOL'S PARADISE.

EVEN in the seclusion of her own apartment the widow did not tear open her Edgar's letter and greedily devour it with her eyes; nor, as a matter of fact perhaps, is that course of action the usual one in such cases except upon the stage, where one has to consider the conditions of distance—the gallery. In real life such treatment is only applied to telegrams. When a woman, especially, has a *billet-doux* in her hand, or what she hopes will prove one, she is in no hurry, however impatient may be her natural disposition, to become possessed of its contents; and this is more particularly the case when she has good reason to believe them to be agreeable.

That the cheque had not come back Mrs. Beckett had assured herself by the ordeal of touch; her delicate fingers had weighed the missive and decided that it was too light to contain an inclosure. If her Edgar had kept the cheque she felt that he was secured to her, or, as brutal MAN would have expressed it, 'sold;' for, though she had urged his acceptance of it in any case, she knew that there was in reality no alternative for him.

As she gazed on his handwriting her thoughts reverted to the

day, now thirty years ago, when her father had placed a similar letter in her hand with the quiet remark, 'This is from Sir Robert, my darling; you will do as you please about it.'

How different were her present feelings! It seemed to her as she compared her 'now' and 'then' that she could scarcely be the same woman. Her second offer had been made by word of mouth, and how differently again had that proposal been received! With what rapture had she heard it! With what promise it had seemed to blossom, and how, alas, that blossom had withered ere it ever grew to bud! She could not conceal from herself that there was no such blossom now; yet if there was less to win—and there *was* less, much less—she on her part had less to lose.

'My dear Mrs. Beckett,—Your kind letter has affected me beyond measure. I feel I am not worthy of your love, but I hope to become worthy of it. I am compelled to spend to-morrow at Brighton, but I shall be with you at three o'clock on Monday, when I shall trust to find you alone.

'Ever yours affectionately,

'EDGAR DORNAY.'

'N.B.—Cheque received.'

If the letter was not all that the widow could wish, it was without doubt an acceptance of her proposal; if it did not fulfil her expectations, it removed from her all apprehensions of disappointment; nay, it realised her hopes: but she didn't like his putting off his visit till Monday. Why should he not have come on Sunday? Even supposing he had a previous engagement for that day, why should he not have cancelled it? Was he not engaged to *her*? The notion of Mr. Edgar Dornay's having any conscientious scruples concerning Sunday did not, I regret to say, enter into her mind. What however she resented a great deal more was Edgar's postscript, 'Cheque received,' which seemed almost to have a double signification for her. Her first act, indeed, was to produce a pair of golden scissors—one of a set of implements fitted into a sea shell, such as Aphrodite might have used at a marine Dorcas Society—and cut that neatly out. The note looked a little shorter, but much sweeter, without that little addition.

Mrs. Beckett had not only overlived her illusions, but had, what very few women possess, a due sense of proportion. She acknowledged to herself that concerning the matter between herself and 'another'—so her dividends expressed it—she had got decidedly the best of it. If Mr. Charles Sotheran, whom to do

her justice she would have no more thought of as a husband than of marrying her grandson, had been in the place of Mr. Edgar Dornay, she would have taken a different view of the affair; the obligation would, in that case, have seemed to lie on the other side. His circumstances were such that, to use a homely but very significant expression, he might well have 'jumped at' such an offer. But Edgar Dornay was well born, in possession of moderate means, and had made for himself a certain position in the world. She was not only very pleased that he had accepted her proposal, but grateful. It was impossible for him of course to speak of 'terms,' but she at once resolved that they should be made as much to his liking as possible. Her first idea—the idea of a woman in love, but one which fitted also with the natural generosity of her disposition—was to make him independent of her. And it was not enough for her to tell him her intentions; she wished to be able to assure him that they were already in process of being carried out. This was a notion that would never of course have entered into the head of a young girl; but in her case it had a certain pathos in it—it was a tacit confession that she knew she was not loved for herself alone. If the other reason for which he loved her should be strengthened, would he not then love her more? There was at least nothing sordid in such an act of voluntary munificence.

She dashed off three lines to her man of business, Mr. Rennie, to request his attendance on her after breakfast on Monday morning: 'Come to breakfast if you can,' she added impulsively, 'though I am afraid our hour (9.30) will be a little late for you.' Then she went down to dinner in the highest spirits.

There are some unphilosophic persons who do not much believe in the chastening influence of adversity; who confess that they are never so unsympathetic as when they are in low spirits, and that melancholy and moroseness are with them synonymous terms. We admire their candour, but pity the littleness of their minds. Still, it must be acknowledged that when folks are in good luck they are more agreeable as companions than when they are depressed; kindly natures expand under the influence of good fortune, and are very willing that their fellow-creatures should share, or at all events receive, the overplus of it. Mrs. Beckett had been always kind to her young companion, but never had she borne herself so warmly towards her as on the present occasion; in the familiarity of their conversation when they had gone up to the drawing-room she even ventured once more to hint at the subject

of Mary's settling in life, though without any direct reference to the husband she had chosen for her.

'You are very young still, my dear, it is quite true; but age is relative; to a girl of fortune it is of small consequence, but, to one with small means, every year after she becomes marriageable is twelve months lost.'

'I have never heard the value of time pointed out with such particularity,' said Mary smiling.

'My dear, I am quite serious; it is the fact,' returned the widow earnestly, 'and I need not tell you, Mary, that whomsoever you may choose for a husband—though you know my especial wishes in that matter—I shall take care that you do not go to him without a dowry.'

'You are very good and very kind,' said Mary, with a faint flush; she was used to hints of the widow's intentions towards her which had at first made her very uncomfortable; there was something in her nature which revolted against them, though she had found from experience that it was better to pass them lightly by. 'But unless, my dear Mrs. Beckett, your generosity partakes of the nature of what Mr. Rennie was trying to explain to us the other day, a time bargain, or that you want to get rid of me as soon as possible——'

'Nay, nay,' interrupted the widow, 'you know I don't mean that.' She was conscious, however—under the new conditions of her life that was to be—of having contemplated Mary's departure as a possibility. No idea of jealousy had crossed her mind, but it had occurred to her that when she became Mrs. Dornay, not only would Mary's office become a sinecure, but that there would be something embarrassing in her presence. In the case of turtle doves, however roomy their nest may be, the happy pair, or the female at all events, prefers it to be free from lodgers. 'My house will always be your home, Mary, but circumstances may alter as regards myself—I may not be in a position—nobody knows what may happen.'

The widow was in a quagmire, in which her struggles to escape only sank her the deeper; she felt she had gone too far in hinting at any alteration in her mode of life, and she did not know how to erase the impression her words might have conveyed.

Mary, however, was quite innocent of all suspicion. She thought Mrs. Beckett was referring to the uncertainties of human life. 'It will be long indeed, I hope, and have every reason to believe,' she answered earnestly, 'before I have to come to any resolution on that account.'

The widow bit her lip and was silent. It was possible, had Mary given her any encouragement, that she might have made a confidante of her then and there; but under present circumstances that was out of the question. It was certainly very unpleasant that the idea of change in her condition had only associated itself in Mary's mind with her decease. She would take care to let Mr. Rennie understand that she had sent for him with quite other views than to give him her testamentary instructions.

'I know you hate to perform in public, Mary,' she said with some abruptness (it was the one thing in Mrs. Beckett's manner which now and then betrayed the relative positions occupied by Miss Marvon and herself), 'but since we are quite alone, perhaps you will play something on the piano.'

It was an elastic request, and Mary took full advantage of it, for music was her delight. She played piece after piece, now grave, now gay, and at the end of each the widow murmured, 'That is indeed a treat,' or 'Thank you,' or 'How charming!' But what was played was in fact only the accompaniment, more or less suitable, to her own thoughts.

When Mary's fingers evoked pathos, Mrs. Beckett's mind reverted to her girlhood, so long past and gone; to the simple pleasures of her youth, and to its dreams; which, though great things had befallen her, had been far indeed from being realised. When the strain grew sombre her middle life passed once more before her, haunted by the ghost of love, and shadowed by a hated presence. When the tune was bright and joyous, she painted her future in bright colours, and likened the remainder of her days to an Indian summer. But as to whether Beethoven was being played, or Mozart, or Chopin, the widow neither knew nor cared, so long as the notes were not so loud as to interfere with her own reflections. And so it is with a good many other people who affect to 'doat on music.'

CHAPTER VIII.

MR. RENNIE'S INSTRUCTIONS.

THE next day was Sunday, a *dies non*; the day of all days—since in well-regulated establishments no work is permitted—on which suspense is intolerable. Again and again did Mrs. Beckett congratulate herself that she had taken time by the forelock, and

secured her Edgar's reply. How dreadful it would have been to have pictured him to herself at Brighton, ignorant of her devotion to him, and—it was really within the bounds of possibility—flirting with somebody else! Even as it was, the day was a very long one, and contrary to her custom she went twice to church, not so much, however, with the idea of special thanksgiving as of withdrawing her mind from its monopolising topic. The preacher was eloquent and fashionable, but it is doubtful whether he succeeded in producing in her that description of meditation which, above all others, should be 'fancy free.'

Contrary to the widow's expectations, Mr. Rennie arrived at the breakfast hour on Monday morning. The lawyer was a man of slight, almost insignificant figure, young for his years, which were verging on sixty; but with an astute and intelligent face. His eyes, blue and keen as a sword blade, like it were kept in scabbard until there was need for them. Their lids were usually pressed so close together that it was a wonder he saw out of them. The habit was ascribed to near-sightedness, an idea which he was very far from wishing to combat. The peculiarity had arisen perhaps in trick, but he had found it useful to him. When he heard things from his clients (and he sometimes did) which would have opened ordinary eyes very wide indeed, they only lifted his lashes a little. Nothing seemed to astonish him. On the other hand, he sometimes astonished others; on occasions which demanded their exhibition, some folks knew that he could open his eyes to some purpose, when their effect was that of a policeman's bull's-eye suddenly turned on a detected thief. Mr. Rennie was an old bachelor, and his manners were of the old school of politeness: his behaviour to women, always kindly but mingled with a certain respect, was quite different from the affected devotion displayed to them by men of fashion; his ways with men were various, but he had a general reputation for something more than mere scrupulous integrity; a man of honour first and a lawyer afterwards. His business was mainly confined to the affairs of great families, and the administration of large estates; but he had been known to give valuable advice to persons of comparative insignificance, and, what was more, in a very unprofessional manner—without a fee. Mrs. Beckett adored him, and told him so; just a little to his alarm. A woman who had buried two husbands was, he thought, capable of reverting to first principles in the way of matrimony, and of capturing the third by force. But on the whole he liked her; and not least for her

treatment of Mary Marvon. He had seen a great deal of the dependants of the great, and they did not impress him favourably; but in this young lady he recognised modesty without subservience, and an unflinching self-respect.

'This is a compliment indeed, Mr. Rennie,' were the widow's first words of welcome. 'I never thought you would come to breakfast.'

'It is almost as dangerous to give an invitation, madam, under the impression that it will not be accepted,' was his reply, 'as to back a bill under the contrary impression. You seem to have made every preparation, however, for my entertainment.'

'There are some cutlets and fish; oh, I see what you mean; why of course there is Mary.' The lawyer was shaking hands with her with something more than his usual politeness. 'I knew you would never dare to take breakfast with me alone. Under pretence of being my chaperon, or sheep dog, everyone knows that Mary is here for the protection of the public.'

'*Quis custodiet?*' murmured the lawyer, with a glance of pity towards the orphan girl.

'What do you say, sir?' inquired the widow sharply. 'I always suspect the dead languages.'

'I was merely quoting a legal phrase, my dear madam, with reference to the custody of infants. By the bye, I have been having some correspondence with our friend Mr. Paton that would surprise you. What do you think of an infant nine feet high?'

'The giant! Oh, we've heard of him!' exclaimed Mary, laughing.

'Well, he's a minor, and since it was through Mr. Paton's advice that he threw up his engagement, my client thinks he is responsible for his future. As he shakes the pillars of domestic peace at the Hall—and, indeed, the Hall too—it has become necessary to place him somewhere else, and I have been offering premiums to proprietors of travelling shows to take him. Never was a respectable family solicitor placed in such a false position.'

'The mention of Mr. Rennie's profession, Mary,' observed the widow, 'which nobody, I am sure, would ever guess, unless he referred to it——'

'Now, do you really expect me to take that as a compliment, Mrs. Beckett?' interposed the lawyer.

'The mention of his profession,' continued the widow, 'reminds me that he has come here professionally, and that I must

deny myself the pleasure of your company this morning; but you can have the carriage, of course, as usual.'

'Thank you, dear Mrs. Beckett, but I had much rather walk.'

'Then take Simmons with you, I beg, my dear: you are much too young and pretty to go without a maid.'

'I would much prefer Alexander,' said Mary.

'Now did you ever know such a girl, Mr. Rennie?' exclaimed the widow appealingly. 'She prefers walking to driving, and the company of Alexander to that of Simmons.'

'It depends upon who Alexander is,' observed the lawyer judicially. 'If he's an attractive young man——'

'It is a dog, my dear sir; it's Mr. Beckett's old St. Bernard.'

'Oh, indeed! One of those animals who go about with a bottle of Chartreuse—no, by the bye, that's the other monastery—of brandy round their necks, and save people in the snow. In winter a most admirable companion, but in summer I should have thought——'

'He is charming at all times,' laughed Mary, rising from her seat; 'I've not had a walk with him for weeks, so that we shall have lots to say to one another.'

And with a pretty curtsy and a pleasant smile she left the seniors to their conversation.

'That's a good girl, I'm sure,' observed the lawyer, when the young lady had left the room.

'An excellent girl,' assented Mrs. Beckett warmly; 'she is quite like a younger sister to me.'

'Without the little jealousies and antagonisms which relations sometimes give rise to, eh?' observed Mr. Rennie slyly.

'Upon my word, you're as bad as Mr. Paton,' exclaimed the widow. 'I suppose that is why you lawyers get such a bad character: you mix with such queer clients and catch their complaints.'

'Yes, that's it. We go about doing good at all risks.'

'Well, I want you to do some good to-day, or rather to put me, as your client, in the way of doing it. I particularly wish to benefit a certain person—who shall remain nameless, if you please, for the present—pecuniarily. I wish that person, though closely connected with me, to be made independent of me, no matter what may happen as regards change of circumstances, or even of feeling in myself.'

'A very generous proposition,' observed the lawyer, stirring his tea, and thinking to himself, 'Now she is going to provide for

that young girl. A very good thing too. Companionship is no inheritance, and one woman's affection for another is never to be depended on: though it looks as firm as the solid earth, there is always a possibility of a landslip.'

As Mrs. Beckett remained silent, he looked up at her through his screwed-up eyes and nodded encouragement. The widow was blushing, and pursuing a peach stone across her plate with a trembling finger—a sign of embarrassment which by no means astonished the lawyer. People, in his experience, were generally more ashamed of their benevolent intentions, especially if they were of a Quixotic character, than of their revenges.

'A highly laudable idea,' he continued, 'if one is only assured, which, no doubt, you are in this case, of the worthiness of the individual to be benefited.'

'I have every confidence in the person in question, Mr. Rennie. Perhaps, without beating about the bush, it may be as well to state to you, of course in the strictest confidence, that the person I have in my mind is my future husband.'

For the moment Mr. Rennie forgot his office and even himself. He opened his eyes to their fullest extent, not in reproof, as usual, but in sheer amazement.

'Alexander has gone out with Miss Marvon,' said the widow severely.

'Alexander, my dear madam?' stammered the other.

'Yes—the dog. I thought you whistled, sir.' And, indeed, it was true that the least ghost of a whistle had somehow escaped from the old lawyer's lips.

'Good heavens, madam! nothing was further from my thoughts. It is no whistling matter.'

'So I should hope,' returned the widow implacably; she was very much offended.

'Thank heavens, it isn't me; that's one comfort,' was the lawyer's reflection, which assisted him in summoning a gentle smile.

'If I have exhibited any amazement, my dear Mrs. Beckett,' he said, 'it was from the consideration of your great courage and confidence in human nature.'

'I think I am old enough to know my own mind, Mr. Rennie.'

'I don't know as to that. A woman, they say, is as old as she looks, in which case I must needs doubt your judgment.'

'I am glad you have something civil to say at last.'

'Civil! My dear Mrs. Beckett, you must be well aware that my feelings towards you are not those of a mere acquaintance, or even such as should exist between lawyer and client.'

'You would not have dared to say that ten minutes ago,' smiled the widow, who had by this time recovered, not only her self-possession, but her good humour; from which it may be gathered that she was not absolutely impervious to flattery.

'Well, I dare to say it now; and something more. On one occasion, when I had had the opportunity of being of service to you, you were graciously pleased to call me your guardian.'

'I went further, and said "guardian angel," put in Mrs. Beckett frankly, but with a tinge of colour. He was referring to a certain time when his advice had restrained her from placing what would have been a most ill-judged confidence in her late husband.

'As your friend and well-wisher, at all events,' pursued the lawyer modestly, 'it is my duty now to point out to you that your position is a very exceptional one. The gentleman you have in your mind you will make not only your husband, but a prince consort.'

'And how do you know that he is not a prince already?' inquired the widow, smiling.

The question was a little embarrassing, for the man Mr. Rennie had in his mind was certainly not a prince, nor at all like one, being in fact no other than Mr. Ralph Dornay. He knew that he was intimate at the house, and thought him just the sort of calculating humbug to have learnt the length of Mrs. Beckett's foot.

'If he had been a prince I think you would have called him a personage and not a person,' returned the lawyer dexterously.

'He is a prince to me,' said the widow gently; 'to us women all men seem so while they are our lovers.'

'I suppose they do,' observed the lawyer drily. He was considering whether, even to his betrothed, Mr. Ralph Dornay could appear to possess any princely attributes.

'This is a matter, Mr. Rennie,' continued the widow, stung by his cynical tone, 'in which I have no need of advice, except professionally. My mind is quite made up as to the main question.'

The lawyer bowed, and took a pinch of snuff; it was the only vice of which he had ever been accused—or at least convicted.

'I am here, my dear madam, to obey your instructions. You

wish, as I understand, that this fortunate gentleman should enjoy a handsome life interest in your estate.'

'That is of course. It is the usual arrangement, is it not?'

'It is a common one, but by no means without exception. In such a case as yours, a woman's fortune is settled upon her and her children, but, if she wishes it, a sufficient income is reserved to her husband should he survive her.'

'Well, you can draw up the settlement; but I wish a certain sum to be given absolutely to my husband on the day of our marriage; fifty thousand pounds.'

'My dear Mrs. Beckett!'

'Such are my wishes; be so good as to embody them in—I don't know how to express myself technically—but I know what I want to have done.'

Mr. Rennie smiled as though he had no doubt of that.

'I suppose as regards the lump sum a deed of gift will be necessary?' continued the widow.

'Not at all. There will be certain preliminary arrangements, and then you have only to sign a cheque.'

The widow's eyes sparkled with pleasure. To place a cheque for 50,000*l.* in the hands of her intended would be, she felt, an enormous pleasure to her.

'A draft of your instructions shall be prepared for your approval,' resumed the lawyer, who had no intention of precipitating matters. 'Is there anything—or anyone else—you wish to mention?'

Since cheques for 50,000*l.* were flying about, it struck the kind-hearted lawyer that Mary Marvon might well be brought to his client's remembrance before Mr. Ralph Dornay came into his kingdom, after which her chance would be small indeed.

'No,' said the widow thoughtfully. 'Nothing else occurs to me. You will not be long about it, I conclude; it is all so very simple.'

'Very,' assented the lawyer without moving a muscle; but his eyes, if he had been so foolish as to open them, would have betrayed the satire.

'Then it could be done at once, in half an hour?'

'What? The deed? The settlement?'

The idea of despatch is to a lawyer always hateful; but the suggestion of tying-up a property like Mrs. Beckett's—as if it had been a brown paper parcel—in half an hour, sounded to Mr. Rennie like a blasphemy in the ears of a bishop.

‘I don’t mean that, but I should like to have a note of my intentions drawn out in a proper manner, for my own satisfaction.’

‘What she means,’ said the lawyer to himself, ‘is for private exhibition. She thinks it will bring the tears into the eyes of that specious humbug, whereas it will only make his mouth water. My dear madam, what a fool you are about to make of yourself. It is curious when Nature has done her very best almost in that way, how some folks will improve upon it.’ Then he added aloud, ‘You shall have a note of your instructions before your luncheon hour, Mrs. Beckett.’

He named that time because he felt sure that if the man she had in her mind was Mr. Ralph Dornay he would come to lunch; but he was not quite certain that he was the man. A curiosity very foreign to his character impelled him, as he took his leave, to learn her secret.

‘I suppose it would be indiscreet in me, dear Mrs. Beckett, to hazard a guess as to the subject of our conversation this morning?’

‘It would be indiscreet in me to tell,’ said the widow, smiling, which indeed, considering that no word of love had passed her Edgar’s lips, it certainly would have been.

‘If I was to say that the name of the unknown began with a D and ended with a Y, should I be very far wrong?’

‘You would be getting “warm,” sir, as the children say at “hide and seek,”’ returned the widow, blushing. ‘I need say no more than that.’ And she held out her hand.

Mr. Rennie took and pressed it kindly, but he did not utter one word of congratulation. He thought his client very foolish; but also that she was about to bring upon herself a greater punishment than her folly deserved.

Mrs. Beckett was well satisfied with his silence; in a case like hers she knew enough of the world to be grateful for small mercies. It was something—nay, it was a good deal—that so old a friend and adviser had not dropped a word about the disparity of years. She had not the faintest suspicion of the cause which made any such remarks an impossibility. Her mind was full of her Edgar, and she concluded that of Mr. Rennie was preoccupied with the same individual. If she had told him the truth it is probable that the lawyer would have known better than to attempt remonstrance, but a certain line in the Table of Forbidden Degrees in the Prayer-book would certainly have suggested itself—‘A man may not marry his grandmother.’

CHAPTER IX.

UNCLE AND NEPHEW.

THE Aglaia in Piccadilly is one of those luxurious establishments for the suppression of marriage called clubs, which lets its upper floor in apartments to members. Those who are so fortunate as to secure them need never step out of doors in search of domestic comfort. After eating, and drinking, and smoking—nay, even reading, if their tastes are so exceptional as to lead them to literature—a pass key opens a private door for them on the second floor, and they have only to go up to bed. ‘Home is home, no matter how homely,’ and the sitting-room and two bedrooms rented by the Messrs. Dornay, uncle and nephew, above their club, were as much their home as though they possessed a house in the neighbouring square. Indeed, as to decoration, these three apartments were by no means homely, while the sitting-room was furnished with great luxury. Some of the treasures of Cliffe Park, too precious to be left to the tender mercies of tenants, had been imported into it, and the taste of Mr. Edgar Dornay had supplied whatever had been wanting to its original embellishment.

To the ordinary eye, however, nothing would have seemed to be wanting, from Cliffe Park or anywhere else, for the Aglaia Club, though the beauty of its architecture was disputed (and what is *not* disputed in architecture?), was famous for its fittings. Everything was so mellow and subdued and harmonious, that, if mellowness and subjugation and harmony can effect one-half of what is ascribed to them upon the human soul, all the members of the Aglaia Club would have been as sure of paradise as a Crusader who had killed a Paynim, or *vice versâ*. On the other hand, notwithstanding these elegant surroundings, these gentlemen could scarcely be set down as spiritually minded, nor indeed did they concern themselves much with paradise at all. They were mostly golden, or, more accurately, gilded youths, who resembled lilies less in their purity than in their exemption from toil; for, when folks are idle, it is my firm conviction that not all the sage-green furniture in the world will keep them out of mischief.

In some cases these gilded youths were not very youthful, and in others they had rubbed some of their gilt off.

Mr. Ralph Dornay suffered from both these disadvantages more than people were generally aware of, for, to do him justice, he was a man of courage; nay, of dauntless audacity, and could

held his head up like a man where another would have held it down through consciousness of not being worthy of that title; one of great resource and of some ingenuity, fit to breast the blows of circumstance and grapple with his evil star if Fate so desired it, and very apt to take advantage of his opportunities when she chanced to be in a better humour.

Sometimes he even made opportunities for himself. A great idea had been shaping itself in his mind of late, or, rather, had suddenly been born there, perfected and complete, as Pallas sprang from the brain of Jove. It was a magnificent conception, the result of which might place him above the aspirations of ambition, but one that was proportionally difficult to carry out. It was not only that there were obstacles in the way, huge as a mountain and as solid, but that his plan required a total change of front in his own views and proceedings. Hitherto he had been a mere satellite of his nephew, content to shine with a very modest lustre in the same firmament, and, upon the whole, a faithful satellite. His best advice, according to his lights, had been always at Edgar's service, and in some things he had given him material aid, not, indeed, from affection, nor even from that tie of blood on which he so much insisted, but because their interests were identical. But now he had it in his mind to be no more a satellite, but a sun, with a system of its own. At present, however, as regarded the attainment of his object he had no system whatever, but only an audacious and well-nigh desperate resolve; it was necessary to feel his way, and with all the more caution since on some portion of it he would have to retrace his steps.

It was the evening of the day on which Edgar Dornay had accepted Mrs. Beckett's offer, and uncle and nephew were alone together in their private apartment. They had not met since they had lunched together in Park Lane, the younger man having dined out, and the elder at the club, as was usual in both cases. The former had donned his dressing-gown and slippers, but the latter was in full evening panoply. Uncle Ralph was not often seen in dishabille—not because that process of 'breaking up' had by any means begun with him with which most of us, when our ship is no longer classed *Al*, are acquainted, and which men are often quite as solicitous to conceal as are the softer sex, but because he felt the danger, at his age, of once giving way to slovenly habits. He was as fond of ease as most people—nay, fonder—but in his present circumstances he did not consider that

he could afford to take it. His attire, though quite as faultless and more equable—he was never seen in dittos even in September—was not so splendid as that of some members of the Aglaia, and remembering, perhaps, the dictum of the poet—

What are myrtles and wreaths to the brow that is wrinkled?—

he seldom had a flower in his buttonhole. On the present occasion, however, he wore a sprig of stephanotis, which attracted his companion's attention.

'What! two flowers in one day in your coat, Ralph! You must be going to be married.'

'The first one, my dear Edgar,' returned Uncle Ralph, slowly expelling the smoke of his cigar from his lips, and nodding towards the mantle-piece, on which Mary's rose was blushing in a wine-glass as though ashamed of the association, 'can hardly be considered my own; I look upon it as having been given in trust.'

'How so?' inquired the other, with a tinge of colour in his cheek, which did not escape his companion's notice.

'Well, I hardly think Miss Marvon would have given me anything of her own free will. Moreover, her choice was peculiar. You know the signification of the common rose, no doubt?'

'I heard you say it was "true love,"' said Edgar, with a touch of incredulous contempt.

'That was to spare your feelings. It's true meaning is "Love's Ambassador." If you yourself are not learned in the language of flowers, Miss Marvon is, you may depend upon it.'

'I don't believe Miss Marvon ever gave her attention to anything so foolish,' said Edgar, with irritation.

'You ought to know best,' returned the other, shrugging his shoulders. 'I admit that there is as little doubt of her sagacity as of her beauty; but she is a woman, and being so, must needs have her little weaknesses.'

'You have insisted upon them often enough, and called them by a worse name,' remarked his companion, drily.

'Yes, I own I have been prejudiced, but, really, her sweetness and gentleness made a convert of me this afternoon. *Peccavi*.'

'What the devil do you mean?' exclaimed the young man, sharply. 'Why, it was only the other day you told me her tongue was like a whip.'

'So it was—to me. But when she speaks of some one else who bears the same name, it is a privilege to listen to her. Her lips drop honey. As for me, I fairly threw down my arms to-day,

and owned myself vanquished. "I confess, my dear Miss Marvon," I said, "that hitherto I have been in opposition to you, but henceforth I am your ally; you may rely on me to advance your interests and your wishes in every way in my power."

'And what did she say to all that?'

'I had hoped you would not have asked me,' said Uncle Ralph in an injured tone; 'she told me that she had no confidence whatever in my protestations, and that as for my alliance, she didn't care one halfpenny whether I was her ally or her enemy—or words to that effect.'

'A brave girl, an honest girl!' murmured the young man admiringly. 'Dear, dear,' he sighed, 'what a happy world this would be if one could only do as one liked in it!'

'Now really, Edgar, you astonish me!' returned the other with raised eyebrows. 'I should have thought that was the very condition under which you had accepted existence. May I ask what you have ever done that you didn't like?'

'Well, for one thing, I lost 500*l.* at Ascot.'

'True,' replied Uncle Ralph sententiously; 'that was certainly a miscarriage of justice. Still it is not an overwhelming misfortune.'

'You would have found it deucedly inconvenient, Ralph, if it had happened to *you*.'

To this observation, as being absolutely indisputable, Uncle Ralph made no reply. 'As to the turf,' he observed, 'whether one has fifty pounds a year or fifty thousand, the end is the same to everybody who goes in for it. If you would only resolve to give up betting, my dear Edgar, every other pleasure would lie within your grasp. You have a very tolerable income. Although I have often advised you to marry money, I am not sure whether in your case an economical wife without a dowry would not in the end be cheaper to you than a rich one who had been brought up—as they all are—in habits of extravagance. It is not as if you would have to live on bread and cheese.'

'This is quite a new view of affairs!' said Edgar scornfully.

'I know it; I have confessed as much, and how I have been converted. Moreover, this Ascot business put *this* in my mind: perhaps if my nephew married the girl he loved, and who will be absolutely dependent on him, he would consent to give up for her sake a dangerous habit, which he will never forego for his own. With her he is secure of happiness if he will only be content with that; and how few of us are able to look forward to such a future.'

'How strange it is,' returned the other with quiet scorn, 'that

a man of your age, Uncle Ralph, and who knows that it is deadly to you, *will* continue to take champagne at dinner, and such lots of it.'

A quick, uneasy smile flitted over his companion's face. 'No, Edgar, I am quite sober, and very serious; nay, in sackcloth and ashes. I am afraid I have done mischief to you through meaning well. In one matter, at least, and a most important one, I have hitherto used what little influence I may be so fortunate to have with you for evil and not for good. It is not pleasant to have to eat one's words, but I believe I have been all wrong about Miss Marvon.'

'Your repentance, like that of most people, Uncle Ralph,' replied the young man gravely, 'comes a little too late.'

'How so? How can it be too late?' put in the other quickly; 'why, it is not six hours ago since Miss Marvon herself——'

'Very likely,' interrupted the young man with a forced smile; 'but to the other party interested—the humble individual who is now addressing you—something has happened within those same six hours. In point of fact, my dear fellow, I am going to be married to Mrs. Beckett.'

Uncle Ralph's cigar dropped from his lips, and lay unheeded where it fell on the delicate carpet.

'Impossible! Incredible! You cannot be really serious, Edgar?'

'It is true as I sit here. It need not astonish you so far as the widow is concerned. I am not so vain or so base as to boast of such things, but you must surely have observed that she had a *tendresse* for me.'

'A *tendresse*! I know of course she liked you—looked upon you with maternal affection.' Edgar shook his head and screwed up his mouth; then, observing the look of genuine disgust on his companion's face, he burst out into a peal of laughter.

'If it's a joke,' said Uncle Ralph, 'I'll laugh with you, Edgar, and welcome. If you really mean that you are thinking of marrying Mrs. Beckett——'

'I am not thinking of it, I *have* thought of it,' put in the other, 'and I am going to do it.'

'Then you're going to disgrace yourself, Edgar, and the honour of the family.'

'As to the family, Uncle Ralph,' was the quiet reply, 'I know no one belonging to it, except yourself, for whose opinion I care one farthing.'

'There are the Dead, Edgar,' answered the other impressively; 'your long line of illustrious ancestors are not, I hope, to be put altogether out of account.'

'What a marvellous humbug you are, Ralph! You are like the cardsharper, who through long practice could deceive himself in his own looking glass, when practising his sleight-of-hand tricks. From continually maundering about the Dornay blood you have got to persuade yourself that there is something in it different from that of other people.'

'I venture to think there is,' returned Uncle Ralph.

'Very good; stick to your theory for all I care; but don't try to force it down the throat of your connections, who know better. Keep it for the general public. And another thing I must request of you—not to talk to me about my disgracing myself. I am the best judge of my own actions and intentions, and I will submit to neither reproof nor dictation from any human being.'

The young man had risen from his chair, and, striding from one end of the room to the other, delivered these words with much fire and fury.

'If I said disgrace, Edgar, I withdraw the word,' said the other gently; 'my affection and respect for you must be my excuse for my warmth of expression. What I shrank from was the contemplation of such self-sacrifice. That you, with your social position, your talents, your youth, should thus throw all your advantages to the winds; it is pitiful, my dear Edgar, it is pitiful!'

Uncle Ralph regarded his nephew with the same sort of regretful admiration that an aunt might entertain for a niece who had announced her intention of becoming an old man's darling. 'So young, so fair,' he seemed to be saying to himself, 'how is it possible that you can thus sell yourself to this comparatively ancient personage?'

'I have very good reasons for the step I am about to take,' said Edgar, mollified in spite of himself by this high estimate of his personal value.

'Thirty thousand of them per annum,' suggested Uncle Ralph drily. 'Still there is a saying that one may buy even money too dearly. And it won't be *your* money to do what you like with, my poor fellow.'

'That is my affair, Ralph; though indeed I have every confidence in Mrs. Beckett's consideration and generosity.'

'Still it is more than likely that her hands are tied.'

'Nonsense; it is well known that Mrs. Beckett has entire control of her income. Not that *I* should want that, as her late husband did, Heaven knows. The man was a greedy, ill-conditioned brute.'

'Oh, I don't question that she will find you a much more agreeable consort,' put in Uncle Ralph. 'There is not the least fear of your suffering from any unpleasant comparisons. But what was Mr. Beckett's happy fate as respects finance may not be yours. Sir Peter may have left his widow free to marry once, but not a second time.'

'Pooh! that's ridiculous.'

'Nevertheless, before committing yourself it would be worth while to look at Sir Peter's will. If it's too much trouble, just ask young Sotheran, who is at the Probate Office, to look the thing up.'

'Sotheran be hanged!' exclaimed Edgar. The irritation in his tone did not escape the keen ear of his companion, who had by this time recovered both his equanimity and his cigar.

'Just as you please, my dear boy; but if I were in your place I would do nothing in a hurry in this matter. There is plenty of time before you at all events.'

'The matter is done, Ralph. The widow——' Here he stopped, for, with all his faults, Edgar Dornay was too much of a gentleman to expose a woman who loved him to ridicule, as would certainly have been the case had he told the true story of his engagement. 'I have already proposed to Mrs. Beckett, and have had the good fortune to be accepted.'

'Not in writing, Edgar?' inquired the other eagerly. 'Surely not in writing?'

'Yes, in writing.'

'I never heard of anything so ill-judged and infatuated in my life,' cried Uncle Ralph, taking his handkerchief from his breast and passing it across his face. There was no doubt about the genuineness of his emotion; though he did not shed tears, the dew was literally upon his face. 'How could you, *could* you, thus wreck all your prospects in life?'

'One would think I was a novice taking the veil,' observed Edgar grimly. Your tone and manner would scarcely be justified if I were a boy of twenty and Mrs. Beckett were three-score years and ten.'

'But what on earth could have induced you to do it, my poor Edgar?'

'Well, I acted from mixed motives; it was done on the spur of the moment.'

'Ah! you were intoxicated by the contemplation of her charms!'

'You will be so good as to remember, Ralph,' observed the young man sharply, 'that we are speaking of my future wife.'

'True. Pardon me. The whole thing is so like a dream—a nightmare—that I forgot it was reality. But what was the reason of this sudden resolve of yours? Was it gratitude?'

'Possibly—that is to say, in part.'

'She has laid you, then, under some pecuniary obligation. Oh, Edgar, Edgar, why did you not come to me?'

'What would have been the good of it? You couldn't have given me a cheque for 500*l*. I suppose; and how were my Ascot debts to be settled?'

'Five hundred pounds! Do you mean to say you have sold yourself for five hundred pounds?' Uncle Ralph started to his feet with a speed of which one would have supposed him incapable. He drew a key from his pocket, opened his desk, and, taking out his banking book, pitched it into his nephew's lap. 'I have more than two thousand pounds there, as you can see for yourself, only awaiting investment, to which you are as welcome, my lad, as flowers in May.'

'You are very kind, most kind, Ralph,' said Edgar gently; 'perhaps, if I had known about it before I might have been your debtor. I had thought you were as hard up—at least for ready money—as myself.'

Uncle Ralph looked a little embarrassed; he had certainly not sought the reputation of being the sort of man who has two thousand pounds lying idle at his banker's.

'I kept the money there for a purpose which no longer exists,' he explained, 'for an emergency that has passed away. Pray take it, or what you need of it.'

'It is too late,' answered Edgar, with a sigh. 'Mrs. Beckett would, indeed, have a right to complain of me if I withdrew my offer because the necessity which impelled me to make it had ceased to exist. Indeed, I am wrong to speak of necessity in the matter; I again repeat that I had mixed motives. I like Mrs. Beckett very much.'

'I am afraid, my dear Edgar, that there is another woman who in the event of this mad marriage will also have a right to complain.'

'You didn't think so yesterday,' returned the young man scornfully.

'Yes, I did, yesterday afternoon, when I heard her speaking about you unreservedly for the first time. Poor, dear Miss Marvon!'

Edgar Dornay's brow grew very dark.

'You, at least,' he answered vehemently, 'have no right to

taunt me about Miss Marvon ; nor will I listen to another word as regards my conduct towards her from your lips. It is enough to feel that one has behaved dishonourably, without being preached at by those who are no better than ourselves.'

To this somewhat pointed remark a slight elevation of his broad shoulders was all the reply that Uncle Ralph ventured to make.

'We shall meet at breakfast to-morrow morning, I conclude,' he said as he lit his bedroom candle.

'No ; I breakfast out.'

'In Park Lane, I suppose ?'

'No ; I shall not make my appearance there till Monday, at three o'clock.'

He did not think it necessary to mention that he was going to Brighton on the morrow till Monday, and would be out of the reach of his companion's arguments for the next six-and-thirty hours.

As Uncle Ralph opened his bedroom door he turned and said, with a slight smile, 'There is somebody who will say of this that "it is an ill wind that blows nobody good." Mr. Charles Sotheran—or Charley, as Miss Marvon calls him—will now have the field all to himself.'

'Mary will never marry Sotheran,' cried Edgar vehemently.

'Why not ?' inquired Ralph with simplicity.

'Because—because—why, because, of course, she doesn't care for him.'

'Nay ; you mean that at present she would not marry him because she doesn't care for him so much as for you. If No. 1 marries some one else, of course she will fall back on No. 2. However, that is her affair, and one of very small consequence in comparison with other matters—good-night, my dear fellow.'

Having shot that Parthian shaft, Uncle Ralph closed his bedroom door. If what happened to Mary, inclusive even of her possible union with Charley, was of small consequence to the speaker, it seemed to be of some moment to his nephew. His lips were absolutely pale with rage, and he muttered words concerning the probate clerk which, if set down in a will, would have invalidated it, as evidencing madness in the testator. No argument which Uncle Ralph had hitherto hit upon had had such weight with him as that parting arrow loosed at random. It had gone home to the young man's very heart, and the barb was rankling in the wound.

(To be continued.)

John Harrison, the Chronometer-Maker.

AT the Royal Observatory, Greenwich, one of the most remarkable instruments is to be seen—the first chronometer, the parent of a numerous progeny of chronometers, used on board of every sea-going ship, to the advantage of navigation, of commerce, as well as of science. As far back as the reign of Queen Anne, in the year 1714, the English Government offered the large prize of 20,000*l.* to the person who should find the method of discovering the longitude at sea, within certain specified limits. The reward was offered to the world, to inventors and scientific men of all countries, without any restriction of nation, or race, or language. To the surprise of everyone—it was thought remarkable, and it *was* remarkable—the prize was won by a man who had been brought up as a village carpenter, of no school, or college, or university. But the truth is that the great mechanic, like the poet, is born, not made; and John Harrison, the winner of the famous prize, was a born mechanic. He did not, however, accomplish his object without the exercise of the greatest skill, patience, and perseverance. Indeed, his life, so far as we can ascertain the facts of it, is one of the finest examples of difficulties overcome, and of undaunted perseverance eventually crowned by success, in the whole range of biography.

No complete narrative of Harrison's career was ever written. Only a short notice of him appears in the 'Biographica Britannica,' published in 1766, during his lifetime,—the facts of which were obtained from himself. A few notices of him appear in the 'Annual Register,' also published during his lifetime. But no Life of him has since appeared. Had he won battles by land or sea, we should have had biographies of him without end. But he pursued a more peaceful and industrious course. His discovery conferred an incalculable advantage on navigation, and enabled innumerable lives to be saved at sea; it also added to the domains of science by its more exact measurement of time. But his memory has been allowed to pass silently away, without any record being left for the benefit and advantage of those who

have succeeded him. The following memoir includes nearly all that is known of the life and labours of John Harrison.

He was born at Foulby, in the parish of Wragby, near Pontefract, Yorkshire, in May 1693. His father, Henry Harrison, was carpenter and joiner to Sir Rowland Wynne, owner of the Nostel Priory estate. The present house was built by the baronet on the site of the ancient priory. Henry Harrison was a sort of retainer of the family, and he long continued in their service.

Little is known of the boy's education. It was certainly of a very inferior description. Like George Stephenson, Harrison had always a great difficulty in making himself understood, either by speech or writing. Indeed, every board-school boy receives a better education now than John Harrison did a hundred and eighty years ago. But education does not altogether come by reading and writing. The boy was possessed of vigorous natural abilities. He was especially attracted by every machine that moved *upon wheels*. The boy was thus 'father to the man.' When six years old, and lying sick of small-pox, a going watch was placed upon his pillow, which afforded him infinite delight.

When seven years old he was taken by his father to Barrow, near Barton-on-Humber, where Sir Rowland Wynne had another residence and estate. Henry Harrison was still acting as the baronet's carpenter and joiner. In course of time young Harrison joined his father in the workshop, and proved of great use to him. His opportunities for acquiring knowledge were still very few, but he applied his powers of observation and his workmanship to the things that were nearest him. He worked in wood, and to wood he first devoted his attention.

He was still fond of machines going upon wheels. He had enjoyed the sight of the big watch going upon brass wheels when he was a boy; but, now that he was a workman in wood, he proposed to make a time-keeper with wheels of that material. After many difficulties—and nothing can be accomplished without them—he succeeded in making a wooden clock, with wheels of wood. This, however, was only a beginning. He proceeded to make better clocks; and then he found it necessary to introduce metal, as being more lasting. He made pivots of brass, which moved more conveniently in sockets of wood, with the use of oil. He also caused the teeth of his wheels to run against cylindrical rollers of wood, fixed by brass pins, at a proper distance from the axis of the pinions; and thus to a considerable extent he removed the inconveniences of friction.

In the meantime Harrison eagerly improved every incident from which he might derive further information. There was a clergyman who came every Sunday to the village to officiate in the neighbourhood; and having heard of the sedulous application of the young carpenter, he lent a manuscript copy of Professor Saunderson's discoveries. The blind professor had prepared several lectures on natural philosophy for the use of his students, but they were never intended for publication. Young Harrison now proceeded to copy them out, together with the diagrams. Sometimes, indeed, he spent the greater part of the night in writing or drawing.

As part of his business, he undertook to survey land, and to repair clocks and watches, besides carrying on his trade of a carpenter. He soon obtained a considerable knowledge of what had been done in clocks and watches, and was able to do not only what the best professional workers had done, but to strike out entirely new light in the clock- and watch-making business. He found out a method of diminishing friction by adding a joint to the pallets of the pendulum, whereby they were made to work in the nature of rollers of a large radius, without any sliding, as usual, upon the teeth of the wheel. He constructed a clock on the recoiling principle, which went perfectly and never lost a minute within fourteen years. Sir Edmund B. Denison says that he invented this method in order to save himself the trouble of going so frequently to oil the escapement of a turret clock, of which he had charge; though there were other influences at work besides this.

But his most important invention, at this early period of his life, was his compensation pendulum. Everyone knows that metals expand with heat and contract by cold. The pendulum of the clock therefore expanded in summer and contracted in winter, thereby interfering with the regular going of the clock. Huygens had by his cylindrical checks removed the great irregularity arising from the unequal lengths of the oscillations; but the pendulum was affected by the tossing of a ship at sea, and was also subject to a variation in weight, depending on the parallel of latitude. Graham, the well-known clockmaker, invented the mercurial compensation pendulum, consisting of a glass or iron jar filled with quicksilver and fixed to the end of the pendulum rod. When the rod was lengthened by heat, the quicksilver and the jar which contained it were simultaneously expanded and elevated, and the centre of oscillation was thus continued at the same distance from the point of suspension.

But the difficulty, to a certain extent, remained unconquered until Harrison took the matter in hand. He observed that all rods of metal do not alter their lengths equally by heat, or, on the contrary, become shorter by cold, but some more sensibly than others. After innumerable experiments Harrison at length composed a frame somewhat resembling a gridiron, in which the alternate bars were of steel and of brass, and so arranged that those which expanded the most were counteracted by those which expanded the least. By this means the pendulum contained the power of equalising its own action, and the centre of oscillation continued at the same absolute distance from the point of suspension through all the variations of heat and cold during the year.

Thus by the year 1726, when he was only twenty-three years old, Harrison had furnished himself with two compensation clocks, in which all the irregularities to which these machines were subject were either removed or so happily balanced, one metal against the other, that the two clocks kept time together in different parts of his house, without the variation of more than a single second in the month. One of them, indeed, which he kept by him for his own use, and constantly compared with a fixed star, did not vary so much as one minute during the ten years that he continued in the country after finishing the machine.

Living, as he did, not far from the sea, Harrison next endeavoured to arrange his timekeeper for purposes of navigation. He tried his clock in a vessel belonging to Barton-on-Humber; but his compensating pendulum could there be of comparatively little use; for it was liable to be tossed hither or thither by the sudden motions of the ship. He found it necessary, therefore, to mount a chronometer, or portable timekeeper, which might be taken from place to place, and subjected to the violent and irregular motion of a ship at sea, without affecting its rate of going. It was evident to him that the first mover must be changed from a weight and pendulum to a spring wound up and a compensating balance.

He now applied his genius in this direction. After pondering over the subject in his mind, he proceeded to London in 1728, and exhibited his drawings to Dr. Halley, then Astronomer Royal. The Doctor referred him to Mr. George Graham, the distinguished horologist, inventor of the dead-beat escapement. After examining the drawings and holding some converse with Harrison, Graham perceived him to be a man of uncommon merit and gave him every encouragement. He recommended him,

however, to make his machine before again applying to the Board of Longitude. He accordingly returned home to Barrow to complete his task, and many years elapsed before he again appeared in London to present his chronometer.

The remarkable success which Harrison had achieved in his compensating pendulum could not but urge him on to further experiments. He was no doubt to a certain extent influenced by the reward of 20,000*l.* which the English Government had offered many years before for an instrument that should enable the longitude to be more accurately determined by navigators at sea than was then possible; and it was with the object of obtaining pecuniary assistance to assist him in completing his chronometer that Harrison made his first visit to London to exhibit his drawings in 1728.

The Act of Parliament offering this superb reward was passed in 1714, in the twelfth year of the reign of Queen Anne. It was right that England, then rapidly advancing to the first position as a commercial nation, should make every effort to render navigation less hazardous. At that time the ship, when fairly at sea, out of sight of land, and battling with the winds and tides, was in a measure lost. No method existed for accurately ascertaining the longitude. The ship might be out of its course for one or two hundred miles, for anything that the navigator knew; and only the wreck of his ship on some unknown coast told of the mistake which he had made in his reckoning.

It may here be mentioned that it was comparatively easy to determine the latitude of a ship at sea every day when the sun was visible. The latitude—that is, the distance of any spot from the equator and the pole—might be found by a simple observation with the sextant. The altitude of the sun at noon is found, and by a short calculation the position of the ship may be ascertained.

The sextant, which is the instrument universally used at sea, was gradually evolved from similar instruments used from the earliest times. The object of these instruments has always been to find the angular distance between two bodies—that is to say, the angle of two straight lines which are drawn from those bodies to meet in the observer's eye. The simplest instrument of this kind may be well represented by a pair of compasses. If the hinge is held to the eye, one leg pointed to the distant horizon, and the other leg pointed to the sun, the two legs will be separated by a certain angle, which will be the

angular distance of the sun from the horizon at the moment of observation.

Until the end of the seventeenth century the instrument used was of this simple kind. It was generally a large quadrant, with one or two bars moving on a hinge,—to all intents and purposes a huge pair of compasses. The direction of the sight was fixed by the use of a slit and a pointer, much as in the ordinary rifle. This instrument was vastly improved by the use of a telescope, which not only allowed fainter objects to be seen, but especially enabled the sight to be accurately directed to the object observed.

The instruments of the pre-telescopic age reached their glory in the hands of Tycho Brahe. He used magnificent instruments of the simple 'pair of compasses' kind—circles, quadrants, and sextants. These were for the most part ponderous fixed instruments, and of little or no use for the purposes of navigation. But Tycho Brahe's sextant proved the forerunner of the modern instrument. The general structure is the same; but the vast improvement of the modern sextant is due, firstly, to the use of the reflecting mirror, and, secondly, to the use of the telescope for accurate sighting. These improvements were due to many scientific men—to William Gascoigne, who first used the telescope, about 1640; to Robert Hooke, who, in 1660, proposed to apply it to the quadrant; to Sir Isaac Newton, who designed a reflecting quadrant;¹ and to John Hadley, who introduced it. The modern sextant is merely a modification of Newton's or Hadley's quadrant, and its present construction seems to be perfect.

It therefore became possible accurately to determine the position of a ship at sea as regarded its latitude. But it was quite different as regarded the longitude—that is, the distance of any place from a given meridian, eastward or westward. In the case of longitude there is no fixed spot to which reference can be made. The rotation of the earth makes the existence of such a spot impossible. The question of longitude is purely a question of TIME. The circuit of the globe, east and west, is simply represented by twenty-four hours. Each place has its own time. It is very easy to determine the local time at any spot by observations made at that spot. But, as time is always changing, the knowledge of the local time gives no idea of the position of

¹ Sir Isaac Newton gave his design to Edmund Halley, then Astronomer Royal. Halley laid it on one side, and it was found among his papers after his death in 1742, and twenty-five years after the death of Newton.

a moving object—say, of a ship at sea. But if, in any locality, we know the local time, and also the local time of some other locality at that moment—say, of the Observatory at Greenwich—we can, by comparing the two local times, determine the difference of local times, or, what is the same thing, the difference of longitude between the two places. It was necessary therefore for the navigator to be in possession of a first-rate watch or chronometer, to enable him to determine accurately the position of his ship at sea, as respected the longitude.

Before the middle of the eighteenth century good watches were comparatively unknown. The navigator mainly relied upon his Dead Reckoning, without any observation of the heavenly bodies. He depended upon the accuracy of the course which he had steered by the compass, and the mensuration of the ship's velocity by an instrument called the log, as well as by combining and rectifying all the allowances for drift, lee-way, and so on, according to the trim of the ship; but all of these were liable to much uncertainty, especially when the sea was in a boisterous condition. There was another and independent course which might have been adopted—that is, by observation of the moon, which is constantly moving amongst the stars from west to east. But until the middle of the eighteenth century good lunar tables were as much unknown as good watches.

Hence a method of ascertaining the longitude, with the same degree of accuracy which is attainable in respect of latitude, had for ages been the grand desideratum for men 'who go down to the sea in ships.' Mr. Macpherson, in his important work entitled '*The Annals of Commerce*,' observes, 'Since the year 1714, when Parliament offered a reward of 20,000*l.* for the best method of ascertaining the longitude at sea, many schemes have been devised, but all to little or no purpose, as going generally upon wrong principles, till that Heaven-taught artist Mr. John Harrison arose;' and by him, as Mr. Macpherson goes on to say, the difficulty was conquered, having devoted to it 'the assiduous studies of a long life.'

The preamble of the Act of Parliament in question runs as follows: 'Whereas it is well known by all that are acquainted with the art of navigation that nothing is so much wanted and desired at sea as the discovery of the longitude, for the safety and quickness of voyages, the preservation of ships and the lives of men,' and so on. The Act proceeds to constitute certain persons commissioners for the discovery of the longitude, with power to

receive and experiment upon proposals for that purpose, and to grant sums of money not exceeding 2,000*l.* to aid in such experiments. The clause of the Act, by which rewards are offered to such inventors or discoverers as shall succeed in enabling the longitude to be ascertained within certain limits, is as follows :—

‘And for a due and sufficient encouragement to any such person or persons as shall discover a proper method for finding the said longitude, be it enacted by the authority aforesaid that the first author or authors, discoverer or discoverers, of any such method, his or their executors, administrators, or assigns, shall be entitled to, and shall have, such reward as is hereinafter mentioned; that is to say, to a reward or sum of 10,000*l.* if it determines the said longitude to one degree of a great circle, or sixty geographical miles; to 15,000*l.* if it determines the same to two-thirds of that distance; and to 20,000*l.* if it determines the same to one-half of the same distance; and that one moiety or half part of such reward or sum shall be due and paid when the said commissioners, or the major part of them, do agree that any such method extends to the security of ships within eighty geographical miles of the shores which are the places of the greatest danger, and the other moiety or half part when a ship, by the appointment of the said commissioners, or the major part of them, shall thereby actually sail over the ocean from Great Britain to any such port in the West Indies as these commissioners, or the major part of them, shall choose or nominate for the experiment, without losing their longitude beyond the limits before mentioned.’

It will, in these days, be scarcely believed that little more than a hundred and fifty years ago a prize of not less than ten thousand pounds should have been offered for a method of determining the longitude within *sixty miles*, and that double the amount should have been offered for a method of determining it within *thirty miles*! The amount of these rewards is sufficient proof of the fearful necessity for improvement which then existed in the methods of navigation. And yet, from the date of the passing of the Act in 1714 until the year 1736, when Harrison finished his first timepiece, nothing had been done towards ascertaining the longitude more accurately, even within the wide limits specified by the Act of Parliament. Although several schemes had been projected, none of them had proved successful, and the offered rewards therefore still remained unclaimed.

To return to Harrison. After reaching his home at Barrow, after his visit to London in 1728, he began his experiments for

the construction of a marine chronometer. The task was one of no small difficulty. It was necessary to provide against irregularities arising from the motion of a ship at sea, and to obviate the effect of alternations of temperature in the machine itself, as well as in the oil with which it was lubricated. A thousand obstacles presented themselves, but they were not enough to deter Harrison from grappling with the work he had set himself to perform.

Everyone knows the beautiful machinery of a timepiece, and the perfect tools required to produce such a machine. Some of these Harrison procured in London, but the greater number he produced for himself. Many entirely new adaptations were required for his chronometer. Wood could no longer be employed, and he had therefore to teach himself to work accurately and minutely in brass and other metals. Having been unable to obtain any assistance from the Board of Longitude, he was under the necessity, while carrying forward his experiments, of maintaining himself by working at his trade of a carpenter and joiner. This will account for the very long period that elapsed before he could bring his chronometer to such a state that it might be tried with any approach to certainty in its operations.

Harrison, besides his intentness and earnestness in respect of the great work of his life, was a cheerful and hopeful man. He had a fine taste for music, and organised and led the choir of the village church, which attained a high degree of perfection. He invented a curious monochord, which was not less accurate than his clocks in the mensuration of time. His ear was distressed by the ringing of bells out of tune, and he set himself to remedy them. At the parish church of Hull, for instance, the bells were harsh and disagreeable, and by the authority of the vicar and churchwardens he was allowed to put them into a state of exact tune, so that they proved entirely melodious.

But the great work of his life was his marine chronometer. He found it necessary, in the first place, to alter the first mover of his clock to a spring wound up, so that the regularity of the motion might be derived from the vibrations of balances, instead of those of a pendulum in a standing clock. Mr. Folkes, President of the Royal Society, when presenting the gold medal to Mr. Harrison in 1749, thus describes the arrangement of his new machine. The details were obtained from Harrison himself, who was present. He made use of two balances situated in the same plane, but vibrating in contrary directions, so that the one of these

being either way assisted by the tossing of the ship, the other might constantly be just so much impeded by it at the same time. As the equality of the times of the vibrations of the balance of a pocket-watch is in a great measure owing to the spiral spring that lies under it, so the same was here performed by the like elasticity of four cylindrical springs or worms, applied near the upper and lower extremities of the two balances above described.

Then came in the question of compensation. Harrison's experience with the compensation pendulum of his clock now proved of service to him. He proceeded to introduce a similar expedient into his proposed chronometer. As is well known to those who are acquainted with the nature of springs moved by balances, the stronger those springs are the quicker the vibrations of the balances are performed, and *vice versâ*; so it follows that those springs, when braced by cold, or when relaxed by heat, must of necessity cause the timekeeper to go either faster or slower, unless some method could be found to remedy the inconvenience.

The method adopted by Harrison was his compensation balance, doubtless the backbone of his invention. His 'thermometer kirb,' he himself says, 'is composed of two thin plates of brass and steel, riveted together in several places, which, by the greater expansion of brass than steel by heat and contraction by cold, becomes convex on the brass side in hot weather and convex on the steel side in cold weather; whence, one end being fixed, the other end obtains a motion corresponding with the changes of heat and cold, and the two pins at the end, between which the balance spring passes, and which it alternately touches as the spring bends and unbends itself, will shorten or lengthen the spring, as the change of heat or cold would otherwise require to be done by hand in the manner used for regulating a common watch.' Although the method has since been improved upon by Leroy, Arnold, and Earnshaw, it was the beginning of all that has since been done in the perfection of marine chronometers. Indeed, it is amazing to think of the number of clever, skilful, and industrious men who have been engaged for many hundred years in the production of that exquisite fabric—so useful to everybody, whether scientific or otherwise, on land or sea—the modern watch.

It is unnecessary here to mention in detail the particulars of Harrison's invention. These were published by himself in his 'Principles of Mr. Harrison's Timekeeper.' It may, however, be mentioned that he invented a method by which the chronometer might be kept going without losing a second of time. This was

during the process of winding up, which was done once in a day. While the mainspring was being wound up a secondary one preserved the motion of the wheels and kept the machine going.

After seven years' labour, during which Harrison encountered and overcame numerous difficulties, he at last completed his first marine chronometer. He placed it in a sort of moveable frame, somewhat resembling what the sailors call a 'compass jumble,' but much more artificially and curiously made and arranged. In this state the chronometer was tried from time to time in a large barge on the river Humber, in rough as well as in smooth weather, and it was found to go perfectly, without losing a moment of time.

Such was the condition of Harrison's chronometer when he arrived in London with it in 1735, in order to apply to the commissioners appointed for providing a public reward for the discovery of the longitude at sea. He first showed it to several members of the Royal Society, who cordially approved of it. Five of the most prominent members—Dr. Halley, Dr. Smith, Dr. Bradley, Mr. John Machin, and Mr. George Graham—furnished Harrison with a certificate, stating that the principles of his machine for measuring time promised a very great and sufficient degree of exactness. In consequence of this certificate the machine, at the request of the inventor and at the recommendation of Sir Charles Wager, First Lord of the Admiralty, was placed on board a man-of-war, and carried, with Mr. Harrison, to Lisbon and back again. The chronometer was not affected by the roughest weather, or by the working of the ship through the vast rolling waves of the Bay of Biscay. By means of its exact measurement of time an error of almost a degree and a half (or ninety miles) in the computations of the reckoning of the ship was corrected at the mouth of the Channel.

Upon this first successful trial of his chronometer the Commissioners of Longitude gave Harrison the sum of 500*l.*, on condition that he should proceed to make further improvements in his machine. Mr. George Graham urged that the Commissioners should award him double the amount; but this was refused. At the recommendation of Lord Monson, however, Harrison accepted the sum as a help towards the heavy expenses and labour which he had incurred, and was about to incur, in perfecting the machine. He was instructed to make his new chronometer of less dimensions than the first, which was thought too cumbersome and to occupy too much space on board.

He accordingly proceeded to make his second chronometer. It occupied a space of about only half the size of the first. He introduced several improvements. He lessened the number of the wheels, and thereby diminished friction. But the general arrangement remained the same. This second machine was finished in 1739. It was much more simple in its arrangement, and much less cumbrous in its dimensions. It answered even better than the first, and though it was not tried at sea its motions were sufficiently exact for finding the longitude within the nearest limits proposed by Parliament.

Not satisfied with his two machines, Harrison proceeded to make a third. This was of an improved construction, and occupied still less space, the whole of the machine and its apparatus standing upon an area of only four square feet. It was in such forwardness in January 1741 that it was exhibited before the Royal Society, and twelve of the most prominent members signed a certificate of 'its great and excellent use, as well for determining the longitude at sea as for correcting the charts of the coasts.' The testimonial concluded: 'We do recommend Mr. Harrison to the favour of the Commissioners appointed by Act of Parliament as a person highly deserving of such further encouragement and assistance as they shall judge proper and sufficient to finish his third machine.' The Commissioners granted him a further sum of 500*l.* accordingly. Harrison was now reduced to necessitous circumstances by his continuous application to the improvement of the timekeepers. He had also got into debt, and required further assistance to enable him to proceed with their construction.

Although Harrison had promised that the third machine would be ready for trial on August 1, 1743, it was not finished for some years after. In June 1746 we find him again appearing before the Board, asking for further assistance. While proceeding with his work he found it necessary to add a new spring, 'having spent much time and thought in tempering them.' Another 500*l.* was voted to enable him to pay his debts, to maintain himself and family, and to complete his machine.

Three years later he exhibited his third machine to the Royal Society, when he was awarded the Gold Medal for the year. In presenting it Mr. Folkes, the President, said to Mr. Harrison, 'I do here, by the authority and in the name of the Royal Society of London for the improving of natural knowledge, present you with this small but faithful token of their regard and esteem. I

do, in their name, congratulate you upon the successes you have already had, and I most sincerely wish that all your future trials may in every way prove answerable to these beginnings, and that the full accomplishment of your great undertaking may at last be crowned with all the reputation and advantage to yourself that your warmest wishes may suggest, and to which so many years so laudably and so diligently spent in the improvement of those talents which God Almighty has bestowed upon you, will so justly entitle your constant and unwearied perseverance.'

Mr. Folkes, in his speech, spoke of Mr. Harrison as 'one of the most modest persons he had ever known.' 'In speaking of his own performances he has assured me that, from the immense number of diligent and accurate experiments he has made, and from the severe tests to which he has in many ways put his instruments, he expects he shall be able with sufficient certainty, through all the greatest variety of seasons and the most irregular motions of the sea, to keep time constantly, without the variation of so much as *three seconds in a week*, a degree of exactness that is astonishing and even stupendous, considering the immense number of difficulties, and those of very different sorts, which the author of these inventions must have had to encounter and struggle withal.'

Although it is common enough now to make first-rate chronometers—sufficient to determine the longitude with almost perfect accuracy in every clime of the world—it was very different then, at the time that Harrison was occupied with his laborious experiments. Although he considered his third machine to be the *ne plus ultra* of scientific mechanism, he nevertheless proceeded to construct a fourth timepiece, in the form of a pocket watch about five inches in diameter. He found the principles which he had adopted in his larger machines to apply equally well in the smaller; and the performances of the last surpassed his utmost expectations. But in the meantime, as his *third* timekeeper was, in his opinion, sufficient to supply the requirements of the Board of Longitude as respected the highest reward offered, he applied to the Commissioners for leave to try that instrument on board a royal ship to some port in the West Indies, as directed by the statute of Queen Anne.

It was not until March 12, 1761, that he received orders for his son William to proceed to Portsmouth, and go on board the 'Dorsetshire' man-of-war, to proceed to Jamaica. But another tedious delay occurred. The ship was ordered elsewhere, and

William Harrison, after remaining five months at Portsmouth, returned to London. By this time John Harrison has finished his *fourth* timepiece—the small one—in the form of a watch. At length William Harrison set sail with this timekeeper from Portsmouth for Jamaica in the ‘Deptford’ man-of-war, on November 18, 1761, and returned to England on March 26, 1762. On the arrival of the ship at Port Royal the timekeeper was found to be only five and one-tenth seconds in error, and during the voyage of over four months, on its return to Portsmouth in the ‘Merlin,’ it had only erred one minute fifty-four and a half seconds. In the latitude of Portsmouth this only amounted to eighteen geographical miles, whereas the Act required that it should only come within the distance of thirty miles or minutes of a great circle. One would have thought that Harrison was now clearly entitled to his reward of 20,000*l*.

But the delays interposed by Government are long and tedious. Harrison had accomplished more than was requisite to obtain the highest reward. It was necessary for him to petition Parliament on the subject. Three reigns had passed: Anne had died; George I. and George II. had reigned and died; and now in the reign of George III. an Act was passed enabling Harrison to obtain the sum of 5,000*l*. immediately as part of the reward. But the Commissioners differed about the tempering of the springs. They required a second trial of the timekeeper. Two more years passed, and Harrison’s son again departed with the instrument on board the ‘Tartar’ for Barbadoes on March 28, 1764. He returned in about four months, during which time the instrument enabled the latitude to be ascertained within *ten* miles, or *one-third* the required geographical distance.

Harrison memorialised the Board again and again. In the following September they virtually recognised his claims by paying him on account 1,000*l*. In February 1765 the Board entered a minute on their proceedings that they were ‘unanimously of opinion that the said [Harrison’s] timekeeper has kept its time with sufficient correctness, without losing its longitude in the voyage from Portsmouth to Barbadoes beyond the nearest limit required by the Act of 12th of Queen Anne, but even considerably within the same.’ They would not give him the necessary certificate, though they were of opinion that he was entitled to be paid the full reward.

Harrison was now becoming old and feeble. He had attained the age of seventy-four. He had spent forty long years in working

at the chronometers. He was losing his eyesight, and could not afford to wait much longer.

Full little knowest thou, who hast not tried,
What hell it is in suing long to bide;
To lose good days, that might be better spent;
To waste long nights in pensive discontent;
To spend to-day, to be put back to-morrow,
To feed on hope, to pine with fear and sorrow.

But Harrison had not lost his spirit. On May 30, 1765, he addressed another remonstrance to the Board, containing much stronger language than he had up to this time used. 'I cannot help thinking,' he said, 'but I am extremely ill-used by gentlemen who I might have expected a different treatment from; for if the Act of the 12th of Queen Anne be deficient, why have I so long been encouraged under it, in order to bring my invention to perfection? And, after the completion, why was my son sent twice to the West Indies? Had it been said to my son, when he received the last instruction, "There will, in case you succeed, be a new Act on your return, in order to lay you under new restrictions, which were not thought of in the Act of the 12th of Queen Anne"—I say, had this been the case I might have expected some such treatment as I now meet with.

'It must be owned that my case is very hard; but I hope I am the first, and for my country's sake I hope I shall be the last, that suffers by pinning my faith upon an English Act of Parliament. Had I received my just reward—for certainly it may be so called after forty years' close application of the talent which it has pleased God to give me—then my invention would have taken the course which all improvements in this world do; that is, I must have instructed workmen in its principles and execution, which I should have been glad of an opportunity of doing. But how widely this is different from what is now proposed, viz. for me to instruct people that I know nothing of, and such as may know nothing of mechanics; and, if I do not make them understand to their satisfaction, I may then have nothing!

'Hard fate indeed to me, but still harder to the world, which may be deprived of this my invention, which must be the case, except by my open and free manner in describing all the principles of it to gentlemen and noblemen who almost at all times have had free recourse to my instruments. And if any of these workmen have been so ingenious as to have got my invention, how far you may please to reward them for their piracy must be left for you to determine; and I must set myself down in old age, and thank

God I can be more easy in that I have the conquest, and though I have no reward, than if I had come short of the matter and by some delusion had the reward !'

The Right Honourable the Earl of Egmont was in the chair of the Board of Longitude on the day when this letter was read—June 13, 1765. The Commissioners were somewhat startled by the tone which the inventor had taken. Indeed, they were rather angry. But Mr. Harrison, who was in waiting, was called in. After some rather hot speaking, and after a proposal was made to Harrison which he said he would decline to accede to 'so long as a drop of English blood remained in his body,' he left the room. Matters were at length duly arranged. Another Act of Parliament was passed, appointing the payment of the whole reward of 20,000*l.* to the inventor; one moiety upon discovering the principles of the construction of his chronometers and assigning his four chronometers (one of which was styled a watch) to the use of the public, and the remaining moiety on sufficient proof of the correctness of the chronometers.

Mr. Harrison, accordingly, made over to the Commissioners of Longitude his various timekeepers, and deposited in their hands correct drawings, so that other skilful makers might construct similar chronometers on the same principles. Harrison expressed the greatest readiness to explain his inventions, and to subject them to every required test. Indeed, there was no difficulty in making the chronometers, after the explanations and drawings which Harrison had published. An exact copy of his last watch was made by the ingenious Mr. Kendal, one of Harrison's apprentices. This chronometer was used by Captain Cook during his three years' circumnavigation of the globe, and was found to answer as well as the original. This, as well as Harrison's chronometer, is still to be seen at the Royal Observatory, and both are in a good going condition.

Although Harrison did not obtain the remaining moiety of his reward until 1767, two years after the above-mentioned meeting of the Board, his labours were over, his victory was secured, his prize was won. Notwithstanding his delicacy of health he lived a few years longer. He died in 1776, at his house in Red Lion Square, in his eighty-third year. It may be said of John Harrison that by the invention of his chronometer he conferred an incalculable benefit on science and navigation, and established his claim to be regarded as one of the greatest benefactors of mankind.

S. SMILES.

The Orphan Girl of Lannion.

A BRETON BALLAD.

After the original Text.

IN sixteen hundred and eighty-three
To Lannion came dole and misery.

Mignon, an orphan as good as fair,
Served in the little hostelry there.

One darkling night when the hour was late,
Two travellers rang at the outer gate.

‘Quick, hostess! supper, red wine, and food;
We have money to pay, so that all be good.’

When they had drunken enough and more,
‘Here is white money to pay the score.

‘And now shall your little serving-maid come
With her lantern lighted to guide us home.’

‘Gentles, in all our wide Brittany
There is no man would harm her, so let it be.’

Forth went the maid, full of innocent pride,
Fearless and free, with her light by her side.

.

When they were far on their lonely way,
They began to whisper, and mutter, and say,

‘ Little maid, your face is as fair and bright
As the foam on the wave in the morning light.’

‘ Gentles, I pray you, flatter me not,
It is as God made it—no other, God wot ;

‘ And were it fairer, I tell you true—
Ay, a hundred times fairer—’twere nought to you.’

‘ To judge, little maid, by your sober speech,
You know all that the priests at the school can teach.

‘ To judge from your accents, discreet and mild,
You were bred in the convent cloister, my child !’

‘ No teacher had I, neither priest nor nun,
There was no one to teach me on earth, not one.

But while by my father’s poor hearth I wrought,
God filled me with many a holy thought.’

‘ Set down your lantern and put out the light ;
Here is gold, none can help you, ’tis dead of night.’

‘ Good sirs ! for my brother the young priest’s sake,
If he heard such sayings his heart would break.

.

‘ Oh, plunge me down fathoms deep in the sea,
Of your mercy, rather than this thing be !

‘Rather than this—’twere a lighter doom—
Oh, bury me quick in a living tomb!’

.

The motherly hostess, sore afraid,
Waited in vain for her little maid.

She watched by the chill hearth’s flickering light
Till the bell tolled twice through the black dead night.

Then cried, ‘Up, serving-men, sleep no more!
Help! little maid Mignon lies drowned in gore.’

.

By the cross she lay dead in the dead cold night,
But beside her her lantern was still alight!

THE AUTHOR OF ‘THE EPIC OF HADES.’

The Earth in Meteoric Shadow.

THE occurrence of certain spells of exceptionally cold weather, in February, April, and May, has long been recognised as among the most mysterious of meteorological phenomena. Not in every year, but still so often that the change is recognised by other than scientific observers, the temperature falls from about the 7th to the 12th of February, from about the 10th to the 14th of April, and from about the 10th to the 14th of May. It had been thought sufficiently strange that this should have been noted, as Kaemtz long since pointed out, throughout the whole of Europe; and Erman had been led, by this evidence alone, to ascribe the peculiarity to some extra-terrestrial cause. When it was found that the peculiarity is observable in North America also, the evidence in favour of some cosmical cause for the phenomenon was greatly strengthened. Still there were those, myself among the number, who could not accept the only extra-terrestrial cause which had been assigned, and were disposed to believe that possibly some process usually or ordinarily taking place at the observed times, as, for instance, the breaking up of special ice-fields in February, April, and May, might occasion the lowering of the temperature observed at these seasons. Now, however, evidence has been obtained which seems to show that the cooling in question affects not the northern hemisphere alone but the whole earth, insomuch that the belief seems forced upon us that the cause, whatever it may be, is to be sought outside the earth. And just now, when this explanation of a meteorological phenomenon is suggested, astronomical evidence comes in which seems to show how the lowering of the earth's temperature may be explained—that Adolph Erman, in point of fact, though wrong as regards nearly all the details of his theory, was not so far wrong in the general theory, as had been supposed by some of his critics.

Let us, in the first place, consider the evidence as to the existence of these cold spells.

Theoretically, there should be each year a gradual rise of temperature from about the middle of January to about the middle

of July. We might fairly expect that if the average daily temperature for a great number of years at any given place were observed, the variation of temperature would be found tolerably uniform. Thus for London and its neighbourhood we might expect to find something like that variation of temperature which is indicated in our almanacs (which leave altogether out of account, for some unknown reason, the anomalies we are considering). So that if we represented the average temperature for successive days by an upright line, drawn from a horizontal line indicating the positions of successive days in the year, we might expect the curve passing through the upper extremities of the uprights to have a wave-like form, the crest of the wave lying above the part of the horizontal line corresponding to the middle of July, while the hollow or valley of the wave lay above the part corresponding to the middle of January.

But this is not found to be the case. I have before me as I write a diagram drawn by myself several years ago in illustration of my article on the Climate of Great Britain in the second series of my 'Light Science for Leisure Hours.' I drew a large rectangle, and divided each of its longer sides into 365 parts, to represent the days of the year, and drew through the points of division a series of 365 uprights, on which I marked the mean annual temperatures for the corresponding days, the mean having been derived from Greenwich observations ranging over forty-three years. A connected line was carried then through the 365 extremities of these lines.

The resulting curve is remarkable in many respects. The lowest point occurs in the first half of January (with a singular, though slight, rise of temperature on about the 10th or 11th, between two equal depressions a few days before and after. From the middle of January there is a rapid rise to the beginning of the last week, when there is a sudden sharp fall of temperature to the beginning of February. Then comes a fall which causes one of the most marked depressions in the whole curve, though strangely enough, when a curve is run through the alternations in January and February, so as to leave as much space above as below, the mean temperature for February is found to be above rather than below the average. Still it remains the case that the most marked interruption of the upward rise occurs in February; the greatest depression corresponding to the time from February 10th to February 12th. From February to the beginning of April the rise is tolerably uniform, but from April 10th to the 14th the curve

which had been rising rather sharply descends as sharply, and then ascends again, so that this part of the curve is like the letter **S** placed thus **∞**. Again, the rise is steady or nearly so till the beginning of May, but from the 9th to the 14th of May we have a depression almost exactly like that observed in the second week of April. Thence the rise to about the 29th of June is uniform, though wave-like, *i.e.*, the slope is not constant, but, as we might expect, diminishes as the crest of the wave is approached. In the first week of July the curve is marked by two or three small undulations, which lie nearly in a horizontal direction, instead of indicating the continued rise we might fairly expect at this season. In the last half of July there is a rise to the highest part of the curve, which then begins to fall rather sharply, the fall being less rapid after the 10th of August (instead of more rapid as we might fairly expect). Thence, to the last half of November, there is a tolerably steady fall, but then occurs a rise, making the last two or three days of November and the first week of December considerably warmer than they theoretically should be. After the middle of December there is a very rapid fall in the temperature curve, but a rise occurs in the last week of December somewhat similar to that observed in the last week of November.

The most marked features of the curve are the three cold periods of February, April, and May, and the warm period at the beginning of December.

Let us turn, however, from the south to the north of Great Britain, and see whether the peculiarities noted at Greenwich exist at Edinburgh.

Buchan, in his 'Handy Book of Meteorology,' remarks that the results of all observations hitherto made are unanimous in showing that 'there are certain periods, more or less defined, when the temperature, instead of rising, remains stationary, or retrogrades—instead of falling, stops in its downward course, or rises—and at other times falls, or rises for a few days, at an accelerated speed. I have examined,' he says, 'the temperature of Scotland, for a number of years, and have shown that the following interruptions occur from year to year, with very rare exceptions:—

Six cold periods

1. 7th to 10th February.
2. 11th to 14th April.
3. 9th to 14th May.
4. 29th June to 4th July.
5. 6th to 11th August.
6. 6th to 12th November.

- Three warm periods {
1. 12th to 15th July.
 2. 12th to 15th August.
 3. 3rd to 9th December.

It will be seen that the six most remarkable cold periods, and the chief of the warm periods, are recognisable in Scotland as well as in England.

But on the Continent, also, these anomalies have been clearly recognised. The cold weather which occurs in May is prominent in the weather saws of every country in Europe. Mädler examined the mean temperatures for May, as determined from the Berlin observations for eighty-six years ('*Verhandlung des Vereins zur Beförd. des Gartenbaues*,' 1834), and found a retrogression of temperature amounting to $2\cdot2^{\circ}$ Fahrenheit, from the 11th to the 13th of May—which, be it noticed, is about the time when the most rapid rise of temperature might be expected. Humboldt, in his '*Cosmos*,' speaking of this anomalous cold, says, 'it is much to be desired that this phenomenon, which some have felt inclined to attribute to the melting of ice in the north-east of Europe, should be also investigated in very remote spots, as in America or in the Southern Hemisphere,' which since his day has been accomplished, as we shall presently see.

We have to note also that the peculiarity, besides being observed in widely different places, has been observed at widely different times. Indeed, perhaps the most remarkable circumstance about these cold spells is that not only their occurrence, but the time of their occurrence, should have been noted by the unscientific, not usually ready to compare the weather and seasonal changes of one year (at least, in details) with those of another. Thus the three cold days of April, which before the change of style came early in the month (and were, in fact, for two or three centuries practically coincident with the first three days of the month), have been long known in Scotland and the north of England as the 'borrowing days'—that is, the days in reference to which there had been a borrowing, according to an old saying, embodied in the following doggrel lines:—

March borrows from April
 Three days, and they are ill;
 The first of them is wan and weet,
 The second it is snaw and sleet,

The third of them is a peet-a-bane,
And freezes the wee bird's neb tae stane.¹

It is hardly necessary to remark that a phenomenon which thus attracts general attention, and is also capable of being verified by scientific observation, must be at once marked and very regular in its recurrence. Humboldt mentions that the cold days of May were recognised by the unlearned, and speaks of them as the three 'ill-named days' of May, corresponding with the days of St. Mamert (May 11), St. Pancras (May 12), and St. Servatius (May 13).

With reference to the cold days of February, the evidence is even more remarkable, as well for wideness of distribution in space, as for the length of time during which the phenomenon has been noticed. M. St. Claire Deville, searching meteorological records for evidence respecting the cold week in February (which he had found to be noted throughout Europe and in America), actually found that it had been noted in observations by the pupils of Galileo. These observations extend from 1655 to 1670, and show that the minimum temperature was reached at that time on or about February 12. Mr. Russell, Government Astronomer at Sydney, has pointed out that the same peculiarity is observable in Australian registers.

¹ In the Glossary of Scotch Words and Phrases these lines are given :—

Said March to April
Gie me three hogs upon yon hill ;
And in the space of days three,
I'll find a way to gar them dee.
The first a bitter blast did blaw,
The second it was sleet and snaw,
The third it cam sae full a freeze
The wee bird's neb they stack to the trees ;
But when the days were past and gane
The three puir hogs cam hirplin' hame.'

But the following is probably a more perfect version of the doggrel poem :—

March said to Aperill
I see three hogs upon a hill :
But lend your first three days to me,
And I'll be bound to gar them dee.
The first it shall be wind and weet,
The next it shall be snaw and sleet,
The third it shall be sic a freeze
Shall gar the birds stick to the trees,
But when the borrowed days were gane,
The three silly hogs cam hirplin' hame.'

Here the reference to the borrowing is clearer, for in the former version not days but hogs were borrowed. At the date to which the later poem is usually referred the three cold days of April were called April 1, 2, and 3, so that being cold and bleak they might well be regarded as borrowed by March.

It was natural that in searching for a cause of these remarkable anomalies of temperature, science should have been led to look outside the earth. Forty-three years have now passed since Adolph Erman threw out, in the Poggendorf 'Annalen,' the idea that the sun's conjunction with the August meteors on February 7 and with the November meteors on May 12, might explain the cold spells which occur in February and May. He supposed that the ring of meteors through which the earth passes in August is smaller than the earth's orbit, so that, as the plane of the ring cuts the plane of the earth's orbit in a straight line, passing through the sun, and extending on one side to the earth's place on or about August 11, this line must extend on the opposite side to the place occupied by the earth on or about February 7, passing through the meteors before reaching the earth. The meteor ring, according to this view, would lie between the earth and the sun on or about February 7, and the earth being in their shadow would be to a certain extent chilled. So with the November meteors. The earth would pass into their shadow, according to this ingenious theory, on or about May 11 or 12. Hence the 'cold days in May.'

The theory is very ingenious, and has the advantage of being easily understood. It has therefore been quoted again and again, by persons unfamiliar with astronomy. It has done duty in newspaper science almost every year since it was first propounded. Even so late as 1879, M. de Fonvielle, editor of 'La Nature,' presented it, not as a doubtful theory, but (after the manner which is characteristic, and I cannot but think a characteristic defect of French popular science teaching) as a known fact, which his readers were to accept because he said it—*Je vous le dis—MOI*, he seems to say: 'The chilliness is due to the fact that the earth passes behind a ring of asteroids, which absorbs a portion of the sun's warmth, due to us while he remains above the horizon. The temperature does not resume its ascensional movement until the annual rotation has carried our earth from the shadow of the multitude of small planets which is always projected on the same point of our orbit.'

Now, when Erman first advanced this theory, there seemed to be considerable evidence in its favour, and there were no known objections, at least of any great weight, against it. The case is very different now. Erman's theory, as he presented it, is absolutely untenable by anyone acquainted with what has been learned respecting the August and November meteor systems since 1866

The theory requires that the August and November meteor systems should pass between the earth's orbit and the sun, where they cross the plane of that orbit opposite the crossing places through which the earth herself passes on August 11 and on November 13. But we know now the precise form of each system, and we find that the other crossing-place of the November system lies some nineteen times farther from the sun than the earth's orbit, while the August system also crosses the plane of the earth's orbit much farther away than the earth travels from the sun. In other words, although rays from the sun towards the earth on or about February 7 and again on or about May 12 do undoubtedly fall upon the August and November meteor systems, they so fall not on their way to the earth, as Erman supposed, but long after they have passed the earth. As I wrote in 'Knowledge' for May 26, 1882: 'To charge the August or the November system with robbing our earth of a portion of its supplies of solar heat is to act like the wolf in the fable, who accused the lamb of troubling the stream, though the stream flowed from the wolf towards the lamb.' Our earth may intercept some of the supplies of solar light and heat passing out towards the November and August meteor systems, but assuredly neither of these systems can cut off any of the supplies sent out to the earth.

It is noteworthy, indeed, and, I think, surprising, how little the topography, so to speak, of the August and November meteor systems seems to be understood even by authors who, though writing popularly, are supposed yet to understand what they are writing about, and, in fact, to have no other object in writing but to explain to others what they thoroughly understand themselves. For instance, in Guillemin's '*Le Ciel*,' and in the English translation edited by Mr. Lockyer, there was given a stupendously impossible theory of the November and August meteor showers as produced by a single ring of meteors; and a picture was presented, in which this single ring was shown cutting the earth's orbit in two places, though it was perfectly well known, long before the discoveries of 1866 and following years, that both meteor systems cut the earth's path at an angle. The idea of the August meteors crossing the plane of the earth's orbit at a sharp angle (or, indeed, at any angle) when the earth is in August, and then crossing the same plane (necessarily in a contrary direction) at the place occupied by the earth only three months later, is, of course, outrageously absurd. Yet here two professed teachers of the general public—rather condescending teachers too—not

only describe this impossible movement, but even endeavour to picture it. If they had attempted to show it 'in elevation' as well as 'in plan,' they could not have failed, I should imagine, to recognise its absurdity; but without that, the absurdity should have been obvious.

To return to Erman's theory, it by no means follows from the disproof of the theory as advanced, that the anomalous falls of temperature in February, April, and May, are not due to the interposition of flights of meteors.

Yet the objections even to the general theory are weighty. If meteor streams lying between the earth and the sun diminished our supply of heat, we should expect that some among them would be visible upon the sun's face at those times, when duly magnified by powerful telescopes. A distant flight might, indeed, escape without any of its individual members being detected. But even then one would expect a measurable decrease of the sun's brightness, and hitherto nothing of this sort has been recorded by scientific observers.

But, after all, as I pointed out in the paper above referred to ('Knowledge' for May 26, 1882), the terrestrial test of Erman's theory is the best. If meteoric bodies come between the earth and sun at any time, in such numbers as to make us feel cold in their shadow, they must cool the whole earth, not England, or Europe, or the northern hemisphere. 'If, then,' I wrote at that time, 'on a careful comparison of the mean daily temperature at observatories all over the earth, it is found that the cold snaps of February, April, and May are everywhere to be recognised, then it must be at least admitted that the cause of the peculiarity is to be sought outside the earth herself.'

This, which, when I wrote those lines, seemed to me unlikely, has now happened. There seems no reason to doubt that the relatively cool weather of February in the southern hemisphere (I say relatively because, of course, February belongs to the warmest part of the southern year, corresponding to our August) is not coincident by a mere accident with the cold weather of our northern February. And the same with the cold days of April and May.

We seem obliged, then, to look for some cosmical cause of the anomalous falls in the earth's temperature; and as it is difficult, if not impossible, to conceive any cause which could directly affect the sun's temperature on special days of the terrestrial year, we seem naturally led to infer that somewhere between the earth

and the sun there lies, either constantly or usually, something of the nature of a cloud which intercepts a portion of the sun's light and heat. If we consider for a moment what any special part of the earth's year means, we seem forced to this conclusion. The 9th of February, for instance, is the time when, in her course around the sun, the earth arrives at a particular part of her path; her coming there can in no way affect the sun's light and heat, which therefore cannot be diminished at that date (systematically) any more than at any other time. Yet the heat received by the earth when she gets there, *is* less; hence it seems to follow inevitably that the earth there passes through a region where less heat (and therefore less light) is received, because of some shadow-throwing matter.

Now, when Erman enunciated his theory of the interposition of meteoric streams, it was natural that such meteor systems as those which produce the August and November showers should be regarded as the shadow-throwing matter. Those were the only important meteor systems recognised, and there was no known reason for supposing that many such systems exist.

But at present our ideas about the meteoric components of the solar system are very different. While we know certainly that neither the August nor the November system can throw the earth into shadow in February and May, we know just as certainly that there are meteor systems—myriads, indeed, of meteor systems—which are much better fitted to cloud the solar rays than are those two.

In the first place, we know that the August and November systems are simply those two meteor streams, or incomplete rings of meteors—among several hundred such systems through which the earth passes—which chance to be so situated as to produce the most conspicuous and remarkable star-showers. There are doubtless many among the hundreds of others which are far more important numerically, and as regards the size of their individual components, than are these two. But others we merely skirt, or we have never fairly gauged, because the earth has not yet chanced to pass through their richer portions. These two the earth has passed through more centrally (though we do not even yet know that the earth has passed through the centre of either), and it has also happened that the earth has passed through those parts of these systems which are most richly strewn with meteors—the gemmed region of the meteor-ring—though, again, we do not yet know the true wealth of either system. To suppose that

those of which we know only by passage through their outskirts are of inferior wealth, and that the two we do know are necessarily the richest, is to suppose what, according to the laws of probability, is exceedingly unlikely.

But we also know that the earth can pass through, centrally or skirtingly, but a very minute proportion of the meteor systems which really exist in the solar domain. Picture the earth's path around the sun as what it really is, a mere thread-like ring of space around the sun, having a circular cross-section with a diameter of less than 8,000 miles (a mere nothing), while the diameter of the ring itself is no less than 185,000,000 miles: we then see how exceedingly minute is the space swept each year by the earth, in comparison with the sun's domain even to the earth's distance, and still less with the entire spherical region enclosed within the orbit of Neptune. If we lived on another planet—Venus, for example—we should become aware, *there* also, of multitudes of meteor systems, not one of which the earth passes through. Another set of entirely new meteor systems would come within our ken if we transferred our abode to Mercury or to Mars, or to any of the giant planets which travel outside the zone of asteroids. But even all the planets together do not actually traverse (in the way essential to meteoric encounter), do not, as it were, sweep through, more than a very minute portion of the solar domain. Assuming within the orbit of the earth the same degree of meteoric wealth that the earth encounters in each of her annual circlings, we should have to believe in millions—nay, in millions of millions—of meteoric systems, passing through the region of space lying nearer to the sun than the earth's orbit.

But even this is far from being all. We have every reason to believe, in fact it may be said to have been to all intents and purposes demonstrated, that the wealth of meteoric distribution increases greatly within the earth's orbit, increases much more rapidly within the orbit of Venus, still more rapidly within the orbit of Mercury, and most rapidly of all in the sun's immediate neighbourhood. The proof of this has, of course, not been derived directly from meteoric observation, for we can become directly conscious of no meteor systems but those through which the earth actually passes, nor even of these save by those occasional transits through them during which a few thousands of individual meteors are, as it were, *swept out of them* by the onward-rushing earth. Yet by reasoning of obvious force, the

existence of multitudinous meteor systems, growing ever more numerous and ever richer, towards the sun's neighbourhood, has been clearly established. It has been found, first, that meteor systems follow in the course of comets; it has next been shown that when the earth passes through the track of a comet meteoric bodies in great numbers are encountered; it may be inferred then, first, that every meteor system follows either a comet now existing or one which, like Biela's, has been dissipated by processes whose nature is not as yet known;¹ and, secondly, that every existing comet is followed by a train of meteors (which we may well believe to be in some degree proportional, in wealth of distribution and as respects the size of its components, to the comet with which it is associated). Now it is further found that the number of cometic paths increases rapidly as we approach the sun; and not only is the rate of increase rapid, but this rate is itself increasing as the sun is approached; so that whatever the wealth of cometic, and therefore of meteoric distribution, at the earth's distance from the sun, the wealth of such distribution close by the sun is enormously greater.

But we have other evidence on this point which, though perhaps by itself it might not be very weighty, amounts almost to demonstration when regarded as interpreting, and also as interpreted by, the evidence we have just been dealing with.

The solar corona might in former days have been regarded as in no way connected with the subject we are considering; for in former days, despite the really perfect evidence already existing to show that the corona belongs to the sun, many students of astronomy seemed to regard it as a part of scientific caution to close their eyes to the evidence, and regard as at least tenable the hypothesis that the corona may be a lunar or a terrestrial, or even a merely optical phenomenon. But within the last ten or twelve years the corona has been recognised by all for what (as

¹ It so happens that one of the most remarkable meteoric showers ever seen, the only one which was ever predicted before it had been recognised by annual star-showers, was due to meteoric bodies following in the track of a comet already dissipated, viz. Biela's (or Gambart's, as it is more properly called). This comet, which was divided into two in 1846, was looked for in vain in 1866, and when next due in 1872; but because then it should have passed the earth's track (which it chances nearly to cross) shortly before the earth arrived near the passing place, some students of astronomy (I was one of them, and, I believe, the first) suggested that in all probability when the earth arrived at that part of her orbit about November 27 there would be a display of meteors, radiating (because following the comet) from a part of the star sphere near the feet of Andromeda; and such a display was seen (one of the richest star-showers of the century numerically) on the night of November 27, and with the predicted 'radiant point.'

I pointed out in 1869) it might have been known to be centuries, ago—a distinctly solar appendage. So understood, however, the corona's nature yet remained to be interpreted. To some it appeared as a sort of solar atmosphere, to others as a magnified aurora, while yet others regarded it as due to the constant emission of matter from the sun under the action of repulsive forces akin to those by which the tails of comets are supposed to be produced.

I pointed out long since, and with each succeeding year the evidence for that view has become clearer and more decisive, that whatever other theory of the corona we may accept, we cannot reject the belief that a part at least of the coronal light is due to meteoric matter travelling around the sun in streams and systems like those which produce the August and November star showers, but much more closely aggregated. When we take into account the much greater wealth of meteoric matter near the sun, that such matter is very much more brilliantly illuminated than meteoric matter at our earth's distance, while a portion of it is in all probability rendered self-luminous, if not actually vaporised under the sun's heat, we see that even if no such phenomenon as a total eclipse of the sun had ever been seen, one could predict that when the sun's light was intercepted by an extra-terrestrial body like the moon, a glory of light such as the solar corona would be seen around him. Those multitudinous meteoric streams in his neighbourhood, lit up by a splendour compared with which that of our sun at noon is almost as darkness, could not fail to be conspicuous around the globe of the sun, so soon as his own splendour was shielded from us by the interposed body of the moon. As I wrote in my treatise on the sun in 1870, before the true nature of the corona had been generally recognised, so I write now when none are in doubt as to the corona being a solar and not a lunar or terrestrial appendage—'we have two distinct lines of argument: we are led by the consideration of the phenomena actually presented by the corona to the conclusion that multitudes of bodies too minute to be separately visible exist around the sun; while we are led by the consideration of what we know respecting multitudes of minute bodies actually travelling around the sun, to the conclusion that a corona or aureole of light would be seen around him during total eclipse.' This being so, we cannot hesitate to accept, as at least partially explaining the phenomena of the solar corona, the theory that its lustre is in great part due to streams and systems of

meteoric bodies travelling around the sun in his immediate neighbourhood.

But we have next to notice a peculiarity of the corona which can only be explained as due to meteoric streams, and which, considered in connection with what we have already learned, seems at once to point to a probable and, if demonstrated, a most interesting explanation of the anomalous temperature changes. I refer to the existence of certain rays or streamers, as they have been called (rather from their appearance than from anything which has been proved respecting their nature), extending from the eclipsed body of the sun as the brighter and farthest reaching portions of the solar corona.

During the total eclipse of July 1878 Professor Cleveland Abbe, observing the eclipse from a station on Pike's Peak (not at the summit, but high above the sea level), was able to trace a long, seemingly radial streamer to a distance of no less than six diameters of the sun, or about five million miles from the sun's disc. Four other rays were visible extending not quite so far, but the shortest of them reach fully two million miles from the edge of the sun, assuming its length to lie at right angles to the line of sight; if, which is far more probable, its length was inclined to that line at an acute angle we must adopt a higher estimate.

Now these rays had well-defined edges, and their brighter portions were not by any means radial extensions from the sun. Again, while two grew narrower with increased distance from the sun, the other two (which were apparently the prolongations of the former, on the opposite side of the sun) grew broader with increase of distance. It seems quite impossible to explain these streamers as formed of matter extending outwards from the sun as from a centre.

Professor Cleveland Abbe, himself, came very quickly to the conclusion that these objects were meteor systems. 'Meteor streams!' he said, 'there is the key to the solution: not such meteors as some suppose to be falling into the sun daily, but the grand streams of meteors that cause the numerous shooting stars of August and November, and of the existence of which there is indubitable proof. These streams consist of fine particles or pieces, each a long way from its neighbour, but all rushing along in parallel orbits about the sun (that is, all belonging to any given system) like the falling drops of rain in a thunder-shower. Such a stream as the August meteor system, when far beyond the sun, but still lighted up by it, would reflect to us a faint uniform

light precisely like that of these rays. If one end of the stream were further from us than the other, the effect of the perspective would be to produce a tapering or wedge-shaped appearance. In some other part of our orbit, or with the meteor stream in some other part of its orbit, the perspective might vanish and the two ends appear of the same width. In this way,' Mr. Abbe proceeds, 'we shall undoubtedly be able to explain the very numerous historical and memorable occasions on which flaming coronas, swords, comets, &c., seen in the sky during a total eclipse, have been regarded by the superstitious as divine omens.'

Now here it must be noted that while all this may be true of some meteor systems, it is assuredly not true either of the August meteor system or of the November one. Neither of these systems could be discernible at all during any total eclipse of the sun; for the simple reason that neither is rich enough in meteoric matter nor illuminated with sufficient brilliancy by the sun. We can be certain that *such* meteor systems could not be seen during a total eclipse, if we take into account a simple consideration which Mr. Abbe seems to have entirely overlooked. If a meteor system like the November system, which has its greater part outside the orbit of the earth, could be seen at all it would be seen during the darkness of midnight. Let me be understood. I do not mean that on every night, or even at any given season in each year, we might expect to see the November or August meteors. But it is certain from the known position and movements of these systems, that on many occasions during the last century (to go no further back) they should have been seen far more conspicuously on the midnight sky—that is on the side of the stellar sphere opposite to the sun—than they ever could be seen during total eclipse. In one case we are nearer to them by a whole diameter of the earth's orbit (or 185,000,000 miles); they are illuminated fully like planets in opposition, and they are on a dark background upon which stars down to the sixth or seventh magnitude are visible to the naked eye. In the other case, we look at them athwart the place of the sun, and on a sky which, though it seems dark by comparison with the brightness of mid-day, is yet very different indeed from the dark sky of midnight (as is shown by the circumstance that during the darkest total eclipse of the sun no third magnitude star has ever been seen, and only the brightest stars of the second magnitude). Moreover, during a total eclipse it is only on parts of the sky remote from the sun that stars are seen; close to the sun the

brightness of the corona hides the stars from view. But it is precisely in this brighter portion of the sky during total eclipses that these streamers have been most favourably seen.

It is absolutely certain, in point of fact, that if these streamers are due to meteors, of which I have for my own part very little doubt, the systems to which the meteors belong are close to the sun where we see the streamers. The mere fact that the streamers are bright near the sun's place proves this. Imagine a meteor system at the earth's distance from the sun, seen athwart the sun's place during a total eclipse. Then it is true that from the parts of the system lying apparently nearest the sun, the greatest quantity of light would be reflected towards us, but the diminution in the quantity of light would be very slight, and would be more than compensated by the darkening of the sky with increasing distance from the central and brighter parts of the corona. Apart from this, the line of sight would be directed through a longer range of meteors, the greater the distance of any part observed from the sun's place. A streamer produced in this way would be more conspicuous the farther the part observed was from the sun. The reverse, however, is the case, and in such marked degree that no streamer can be traced at all to a distance of more than five or six diameters of the sun from him. In this we have proof positive, that there is a marked falling off in the illumination of the meteor stream on either side of the sun's place; wherefore (not as a doubtful influence, but with absolute certainty) the parts thus much more faintly illuminated are much farther from the sun.

No other argument should be necessary, but so slowly are considerations of this kind attended to, that it may be as well to strengthen the evidence which, rightly apprehended, is irresistible. Here, then, is another argument:—

If meteor systems lying as far as the earth's orbit from the sun, or even no farther from him than the orbits of Venus or Mercury, could be seen during total eclipse, the chances would be greatly in favour of such a system being seen as a thwart streak not passing directly (in appearance) behind the sun's disc, but lying above or below or on either side of that disc. The meteor stream might be compared to the orbit of a planet, except that all the planets have orbits nearly in the same plane as the earth's, while the meteor systems cross the plane of the earth's orbit at all possible angles. Now even in the case of the planets Venus and Mercury, the orbits, though lying not far from the plane of

the earth's path, lie *always, except for a few days in December and June, in the case of Venus, and in November and May, in the case of Mercury*, above or below the sun's disc as seen from the earth. So that nearly always if there were a meteor system travelling in the track of Venus or Mercury, we should see that system during eclipse (if at all) passing clear of the disc of the sun though near it. In the case of the meteor systems, we should see the earth stream most of the time (if we saw it at all) passing far away from the disc of the eclipsed sun. Take, for instance, the August and November systems. These, if visible at all, would only be seen as coronal streamers on or about February 7 and May 12; at other times they would be seen to lie far from the solar disc.

The fact, then, that during solar eclipses these meteor systems (if thus we are to explain the coronal streamers) seem nearly radial to the solar disc, is another proof, though the other was sufficient, that the part of the meteor stream producing the observed light is in each case very close indeed to the sun.

Now it is clear that when we see a meteor stream as a radial, or rather diametral streak athwart the sun's place, the brightest part of the stream as so seen must lie really behind the sun. It *looks* like a double projection, or rather two projections, one on each side of the sun, but it is manifestly nothing of the sort, but a tract of illuminated matter extending across the space behind the sun.

We cannot, then, believe, as some do, that the earth can ever come exactly opposite a streamer or projection of meteoric matter extending radially from the sun, simply because the position is demonstrably impossible. But this does not necessarily invalidate the meteoric explanation of the cold days in February, April, and May. It would doubtless be easier to believe in the effective shadows of meteors, if they could lie lengthwise along the space between the earth and the sun. But if two or three meteor streams should chance to lie between the earth and sun, not lengthwise but athwart, their effect in shading the earth might be quite sufficient to produce the fall of two or three degrees in temperature observed during the cold spells.

For it must be observed that the fall of temperature, if caused by meteoric interposition, would be due, not to the diminution of the sun's outpour of heat at any particular moment, but to the entire loss of heat during his passage past the interposed meteor stream, and that might last two or three days, affecting the entire

earth, not only those places where day was in progress. The actual supply of heat at any moment would of course only be diminished where the sun was shining; but even where the sun was not shining the effects of the diminution in the total terrestrial supply would presently be felt.

Let us make a rough calculation, however, to see whether the quantitative loss of heat—during, say, three days of the interposition of a meteor stream—could produce any measurable effect.

Suppose a meteor stream to be a million miles through, in the direction towards the sun (from the earth), and to be so broad, supposed to be seen edgewise, as to cover the whole breadth of the sun during three days of the earth's motion in her orbit. Then the region of meteor stream space actually intercepted between the earth and the sun would obviously be a frustum of a cone, having the sun at its base, and the earth near its apex. But we need not trouble ourselves to consider this region as other than a cylinder, a million miles high. Supposing it to be near the sun (as we *must* consider any meteor system visible during a total eclipse to be), we may set the diameter of its base at about 800,000 miles; whence it follows that its volume would be about 500,000,000,000,000,000 cubic miles. If we assume that there is but one meteor, one inch in diameter, in every 5 cubic miles, it would follow that at each instant during the three days' passage there would be interposed between the earth and the sun no less than 100,000,000,000,000,000 members of that meteoric system, each one inch in diameter. Being so near to the sun, these meteors would each hide from the earth a space equal to a circle-inch (that is, a circle an inch in diameter) of his surface, from our earth's view. Now, in a circle-mile there are nearly 1,000,000,000 circle-inches. Hence it follows that, apart from the very few cases in which these widely scattered one-inch meteors would be in or very near the same line of sight, they would hide from view a space equal to 100,000,000 circle-miles, or a space equal to that which would be hidden by a planet 10,000 miles in diameter, close to the sun. This would suffice to cut off about a 7,000th part of his light and heat.

Now from the known wealth and extent of such systems as the August and November meteor streams (the latter of which follows in the train of a comet so small as to require a telescope to make it visible) and the enormous probability that others far richer exist in the space between the sun and the earth's orbit, we

might safely infer that there are in the sun's neighbourhood many meteoric systems far richer than the one we have conceived above. Again, every system of meteors circling around the sun aggregates as its members approach the sun, and segregates as they recede from him, so that we may readily believe in a far greater wealth of meteoric distribution in a flight of meteors passing its perihelion, than the above suppositions involve. Yet again, if we take into account the minute but more numerous components of a meteoric stream, we should have to admit a far more effective interruption of the sun's light than we have considered above. For instance, if we suppose that besides a meteor one inch in diameter in the space of five cubic miles, there were a million tiny bodies whose combined mass would only make up such another one-inch meteor, we should have to assign to these million tiny bodies, not the same light-obstructive effect as the one-inch meteor produced, though their mass is only equal to it, but an effect no less than one hundred times greater.¹ So that by merely supposing two sphere inches of matter, one as a single globe, the other distributed in tiny grains each a hundredth of an inch in diameter, throughout five *cubic miles* of space, in a system having the extent we have considered above, we should have not a 7,000th part but more than a 70th of the sun's light and heat obstructed. This if continued for three days would correspond in quantity to the cutting off of the sun's entire supply of light and heat during more than one hour. The effects of such a sun-shadowing, even though distributed over three days, could not fail to be recognisable.

It should be added that the mere visibility of a meteor system during total solar eclipse implies that it must be many times more richly aggregated than any meteor system encountered by the earth,—shows in fact, that the meteor systems so seen must be at least as rich as we have supposed in the above reasoning.

Suppose, now, that two or three meteor systems chanced to be interposed in the way supposed above. Then the effects deduced would be doubled or tripled; and not merely a recognisable, but a marked loss of solar heat would ensue. If, for instance, it so chanced that there were one meteor stream lying in or near the plane of the earth's orbit and close to the sun, while a little

¹ Each would have a diameter of only one-hundredth of the diameter of the larger, and its diameter being one hundred times as large as theirs it would hide a space on the sun's surface ten thousand times as great as the space hidden by each of the others; but as there are a million of them they would collectively hide a space one hundred times as large.

farther away from him there were another, crossing the plane of the earth's orbit at a considerable angle,—then, as the earth in her motion came behind the former, she would be several days in its shadow. Suppose now that in the course of this time she came behind the second or thwart system also. Then for a day or two, or perhaps three, she would be in the shadow of both these meteor systems. We are not by any means speaking wildly, but most moderately, in saying that small and widely scattered though the individual meteors might be, the effect of their interposition could hardly fail to be recognisable. Nay, oddly enough, the smaller the meteors were individually (with a distribution of a given quantity of meteoric matter per cubic mile) the greater would be the effect of their interposition.

But it may be said, if there are meteoric streams such as these, capable of casting an effective shadow on the earth, these streams ought to be recognisable during total eclipse. Of course, individual meteors could not possibly be seen. A meteoric mass ten miles in diameter, close to the sun's surface, would be utterly invisible in the most powerful telescope ever yet made by man. What, then, would be the chance of seeing bodies whose diameters (even those of the largest of them) would be measurable by inches? But if a meteoric stream can cut off a measurable or recognisable quantity of solar heat, it must of necessity (however dark its substance may be) reflect a measurable or recognisable quantity of sunlight, when favourably placed for observation. Is there any evidence to show that this has happened in the case of the meteoric streams we have been considering above?

When should they be looked for? Manifestly, during eclipses occurring at the time when the earth is opposite, or nearly opposite, the part of her orbit on which such meteor streams cast their shadows. For instance, if the fall of temperature on or about February 7 is caused by the interposition of one or more meteor systems, then, during an eclipse occurring near August 11, or within two or three weeks on either side of that date, we should see meteoric streamers extending apparently diametrically from the sun (that is, forming opposite radiations really due to their lying behind the sun).

Now in the eclipse of July 28, 1851, Airy, the Astronomer Royal, noticed that the corona looked like a radiated cloud behind the moon. In the eclipse of July 29, 1878 (more favourably seen than any other has ever been) a bar of light was seen forming two radiations along the ecliptic, while athwart was

another stream of light (both probably being meteoric streams). In the eclipse of August 7, 1869, four long radial streams were traced by General Myer to a distance of two or three diameters of the lunar disc. (He calls them straight, massive, silvery rays, seeming distinct and separate from each other, the whole spectacle showing as upon a background of diffused rose-coloured light.) In the eclipse of August 18, 1868, the shape of the corona resembled what was seen during the eclipse of July 29, 1878, nearly enough to correspond with the difference of time.

In fine, so far as the pictures and other evidence in my possession enable me to judge,¹ all that is known about that part of the meteor-stream region beyond the sun as seen during eclipses in July and August, and therefore lying between the earth and sun in January and February, corresponds precisely with what we should expect if the cold spell of February is due to the earth's passage through the shadows of meteor streams at that time. It so happens that we have no good pictures of total eclipses in October (corresponding to the April cold spell) or in November (corresponding to the cold days in May). I have very little doubt that when such eclipses come to be observed, similar appearances will present themselves.

It will form an interesting subject of study during future solar eclipses to determine how far the observed meteoric structure of the corona corresponds with the variations of the earth's mean temperature during the year,—in other words, to determine the relative density of the meteor shadows in different months and in different days. One cannot but regret the more seriously, that owing to unwillingness to recognise the clearest mathematical evidence as to the real nature of the corona, the valuable opportunities for observation during the last quarter of a century were frittered away in absolutely unnecessary attempts to prove the corona to be what mathematical considerations had already shown that it is,—a solar appendage.

R. A. PROCTOR.

¹ For illustrations of the corona as seen on these occasions the reader is referred to my treatise on the Sun. This particular point is to be fully discussed with abundant illustrations during the next few weeks in the pages of *Knowledge*.

The Norway Fjords.

ON June 30, 1881, we sailed from Southampton Water in a steam yacht to spend ten weeks in the Norway Fjords—Fjords or Friths, for the word is the same. The Scandinavian children of the sea carried their favourite names with them. Frith is Fjord; our Cumberland Scale *Force* would be called Scale Foss between the North Cape and the Baltic. The yacht was spacious; over 300 tons. Cabins, equipments, engines, captain, steward, crew the best of their kind. Our party was small; only four in all. My friend whose guest I was, and whom I shall call X——, two ladies, and myself. X—— had furnished himself with such knowledge as was attainable in London, for the scenes which we were to explore. He had studied Norse. He could speak it: he could understand and be understood. He was a sportsman, but a sportsman only as subsidiary to more rational occupations. He was going to Norway to catch salmonidæ: not, however, to catch them only, but to study the varieties of that most complicated order of fish. He was going also to geologise and to botanise, to examine rocks and rivers and glaciers and flowers; while all of us were meaning to acquaint ourselves as far as we could with the human specimens still to be found in the crater of the old volcano from which those ship-loads of murdering ‘Danes’ poured out ten centuries ago to change the face of Europe.

And to see Norway, the real Norway, within moderate compass of time is possible only with such means as a steam yacht provides. There are great lines of road in Norway along the practicable routes, but very few *are* practicable; nine-tenths of the country, and the most interesting parts, are so walled off by mountains, are so entrenched among the fjords, as to be for ever unapproachable by land, while the water highways lead everywhere—magnificent canals, fashioned by the elemental forces, who can say how or when?

From the west coast there run inland with a general easterly direction ten or twelve main channels of sea, penetrating from fifty to a hundred miles into the very heart of the Northern Peninsula. They are of vast depth, and from half a mile to

two miles broad. The mountains rise on both sides sheer from the water's edge; the lower ranges densely timbered with pine and birch and alder; above these belts of forest soar ranges of lofty peaks, five or six thousand feet up, the snow lying thick upon them in the midst of summer, glaciers oozing down the gorges, like cataracts arrested in their fall by the Frost Enchanter, motionless, yet with the form of motion. From the snow, from the ice when the glaciers reach a warmer level, melt streams which swell at noon, as the sun grows hot, descend in never-ending waterfalls, cascade upon cascade, through the ravines which they have cut for themselves in millions of years. In the evening they dwindle away, and at night fall silent as the frost resumes its power.

From the great central fjords branches strike out right and left, some mere inlets ending after a few miles, some channels which connect one fjord with another. The surface of Norway, as it is shown flat upon a chart, is lined and intersected by these waterways as the surface of England is by railways. The scenery, though for ever changing, changes like the pattern of a kaleidoscope, the same materials readjusted in varying combinations; the same rivers of sea-water, the same mountain walls, the same ice and snow on the summits, the same never-ending pines and birches, with an emerald carpet between the stems where the universal whortleberry hides the stones under the most brilliant green. The short fjords and the large are identical in general features, save that, lying at right angles to the prevailing winds, the surface of these lateral waters is usually undisturbed by a single ripple; the clouds may be racing over the high ridges, but down below no breath can reach. Hence the light is undispersed. The eye, instead of meeting anywhere with white water, sees only rocks, woods, and cataracts reversed as in a looking-glass. This extreme stillness, and the optical results of it, are the cause, I suppose, of the gloom of Norwegian landscape-painting.

How these fjords were formed is, I believe, as yet undetermined. Water has furrowed the surface of the globe into many a singular shape; water, we are told, cut out the long gorge below Niagara; but water, acting as we now know it, scarcely scooped out of the hardest known rock these multitudinous fissures so uniform in character between walls which pierce the higher strata of the clouds, between cliffs which in some places rise, as in the Geiranger, perpendicular for a thousand feet; the fjords themselves of such extraordinary depth, and deepest always when furthest

from the sea. Where they enter the Atlantic, there is bottom generally in a hundred fathoms. In the Sogne, a hundred miles inland, you find 700 fathoms. Rivers cutting their way through rock and soil could never have achieved such work as this. Ice is a mighty thaumaturgist, and ice has been busy enough in Norway. The fjords were once filled with ice up to a certain level; the level to which it rose can be traced on the sharp angles ground off the rounded stone, and the scores of the glacier plane on the polished slabs of gneiss or granite. But at some hundreds of feet above the present water line the ice action ends, and cliffs and crags are scarred and angular and weather-splintered to where they are lost in the eternal snow. The vast moraines which occasionally block the valleys tell the same story. The largest that I saw was between four and five hundred feet high, and we have to account for chasms which, if we add the depth of the water to the height of the mountains above it, are 9,000 feet from the bottom to the mountain crest.

The appearance of Norway is precisely what it would have been if the surface had cracked when cooling into a thousand fissures, longitudinal and diagonal, if these fissures had at one time been filled with sea-water, at another with ice, and the sides above the point to which the ice could rise had been chipped and torn and weather-worn by rain and frost through endless ages. Whether this is, in fact, the explanation of their form, philosophers will in good time assure themselves; meantime, this is what they are outwardly like, which for present purposes is all that need be required.

A country so organised can be traversed in no way so conveniently as by a steam-yacht, which carries the four-and-twenty winds in its boiler. It is not the romance of yachting; and the steamer, beside the graceful schooner with its snowy canvas, seems prosaic and mechanical. The schooner does well in the open water with free air and sea room; but let no schooner venture into the Norway fjords, where slant winds come not by which you can make a course by a long reach, where there is either a glassy calm or a wind blowing up or down. If you reached the end of the Sogne you might spend a season in beating back to the sea alone, and, except in some few spots where you might not be able to go, you cannot so much as anchor for the depth of water. Shut in among these mountains, you may drift becalmed in a sailing yacht for weeks together, while to a steamer the course is as easy and sure as to a carriage on a turnpike road. Your yacht

is your house, and, like a wishing carpet, it transports you wherever you please to go, and is here and there and anywhere. You note your position on the chart; you scan it with the sense that the world of Norway is all before you to go where you like; you choose your next anchoring place; you point it out to the pilot; you know your speed—there is no night in the summer months—you dine; you smoke your evening cigar; you go to your berth; you find yourself at breakfast in your new surroundings.

So then, on that June evening, we steamed out of the Solent. Our speed in smooth water was ten knots; our distance from Udsire light, for which our course was laid, was 700 miles. It was calm and cloudless, but unusually cold. When night brought the stars we saw the comet high above us, the tail of him pointing straight away from the sun, as if the head was a lens through which the sun's rays lighted the atoms of ether behind it. Sleep, which had grown fitful in the London season, came back to us at once in our berths unscared by the grinding of the screw. We woke fresh and elastic when the decks were washed. The floors of the cabins lifted on hinges, and below were baths into which the sea-water poured till we could float in it. When we came up and looked about us we were running past the North Foreland. With the wind aft and the water smooth we sped on. I lay all the morning on a sofa in the deck cabin, and smoked and read Xenophon's 'Memorabilia.' So one day passed, and then another. On the evening of July 2 we passed through a fleet of English trawlers, a few units of the ten thousand feeders of the London stomach, the four million human beings within the bills of mortality whom the world combines to nourish. We were doing two hundred miles a day. The calm continued, and the ladies so far had suffered nothing. There was no motion save the never-resting heave of the ocean swell. Homer had observed that long undulation; Ulysses felt it when coming back from Hades to Circe's island. The thing is the same, though the word ocean has changed its meaning. To Homer Ocean was a river which ran past the grove of Proserpine. It was not till the ship had left the river mouth for the open sea that she lifted on the wave.¹

On the third afternoon the weather changed. The cold of the high latitude drove us into our winter clothes. The wind rose from the north-west, bringing thick rain with it, and a heavy

¹ Αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ ποταμοῖο λίπεν ῥόον Ὀκεανοῖο
 Νηῦς, ἀπὸ δ' ἔκτεο κύμα θαλάσσης εὐρυπύροιο.

Odyssey, xii, 1, 2.

beam sea. The yacht rolled 20° each way. Long steamers, without sails to steady them, always do roll, but our speed was not altered. We passed Udsire Light on the 3rd, at seven in the evening, and then groped our way slowly, for, though there was no longer any night, we could see little for fog and mist. At last we picked up a pilot who brought us safely into the roadstead at Bergen, where we were to begin our acquaintance with Norway. It stands fifteen miles inland, with three fjords leading to it, built on a long tongue of rock between two inlets, and overhung with mountains. There is a great trade there, chiefly in salt fish, I believe—any way the forty thousand inhabitants seemed, from the stir on shore and in the harbour, to have plenty to occupy them. We landed and walked round. There are no handsome houses, but no beggars and no signs of poverty. ‘You have poor here,’ I said to a coal merchant, who came on board for orders, and could speak English. ‘Poor?’ he said; ‘yes, many; not, of course, such poor as you have in England. Everyone has enough to eat.’ To our sensations it was extremely cold; cold as an English January. But cold and heat are relative terms; and an English January might seem like summer after Arctic winters. The Bergen people took it to be summer, for we found a public garden where a band played; and there were chairs and tables for coffee out of doors. Trees and shrubs were acclimatised. Lilacs, acacias, and horse-chestnuts were in flower. There were roses in bud, and the gardeners were planting out geraniums. We saw the fish market; everywhere a curious place, for you see there the fish that are caught, the fishermen who catch them, with their boats and gear, the market women, and the citizens who come to buy. It is all fish in Bergen. The telegrams on the wall in the Bourse tell you only how fish are going in Holland and Denmark. The trade is in fish. On the rocks outside the town stand huge stacks, looking like bean stacks, but they are of dried cod and ling. The streets and squares smell of fish. A steamer bound for Hull lay close to us in the roadstead; which to leeward might have been winded for a mile. Lads stagger about the streets cased between a pair of halibuts, like the Chelsea paupers between two advertisement boards inviting us to vote for Sir Charles Dilke at an election. Still, excepting the odours, we liked Bergen well. You never hear the mendicant whine there. Those northern people know how to work and take care of themselves, and loafers can find no living among them. I do not know whether there is so much as a beggar in the whole town.

They are quiet, simple, industrious folk, who mind their own business. For politics they care nothing, not supposing that on this road is any kind of salvation for them. They are Lutherans; universally Lutherans. It is the national religion, and they are entirely satisfied with it. Protestant dissent is never heard of. There is a Catholic church in Bergen for the foreign sailors, but I doubt if the priests have converted a single Norwegian. They are a people already moderately well-to-do in body and mind, and do not need anything which the priests could give them. The intellectual essentials are well looked after—the schools are good, and well attended. The Bergen museum is a model on a small scale of what a local museum ought to be, an epitome of Norway itself past and present. Perhaps there is not another in Europe so excellent of its kind. In the gallery of antiquities there is the Norway of the sea kings, Runic tablets and inscriptions, chain armour, swords and clubs and battleaxes, pots of earthenware, stone knives and hammers of a still earlier age. There are the traces of their marauding expeditions, Greek and Italian statuettes, rings, chains, bracelets, and drinking-cups, one or two of these last especially curious, for glass was rare and precious when they were made. The glass has been broken, and pieced with silver. These obviously were the spoils of some cruise in the Mediterranean, and there is old church plate among them which also tells its story. By the side of these are the implements of the Norsemen's other trade—fishing: specimens of nets, lines, hooks, spears and harpoons, for whale and walrus, and crossbows, the barbed arrow having a line attached to it for shooting seals. In the galleries above is a very complete collection of the Scandinavian mammalia—wolves, bears, lynxes, foxes, whales, seals, and sea-horses, every kind of fish, every bird, land or water, all perfectly well classified, labelled, and looked after. Superior persons are in charge of it, who can hold their own with the leading naturalists of France or England; and all this is maintained at modest cost by the Bergen corporation.

The houses are plain, but clean; no dirt is visible anywhere, and there is one sure sign of a desire to make life graceful. The hardiest flowers only will grow out of doors, but half the windows in the town are filled with myrtles, geraniums, or carnations. With the people themselves we had little opportunity of acquaintance; but one evening, the second after our arrival, we were on deck after dinner between ten and eleven in the evening. The sunshine was still on the hills. Though chilly to us, the air

was warm to Bergen; the bay was covered with boats; family groups of citizens out enjoying themselves; music floating on the water and songs made sweet by distance; others were anchored fishing. X—rowed me out in the yacht's punt to a point half a mile distant. We brought up at an oar's length from some young ladies with a youth in charge of them. Some question asked as an excuse for conversation was politely answered. One of them spoke excellent English; she was a lively, clever girl, had been in Ireland, and was quick with repartee, well bred and refined. Their manners were faultless, but they fished as if they had been bred to the trade. They had oilskin aprons to save their dresses, and they pulled up their fish and handled their knives and baits like professionals.

Our first taste of Norway, notwithstanding the perfume of salt ling, was very pleasant; but we had far to go—as far as Lofoden if we could manage it—and we might not loiter. We left Bergen on the 6th with a local pilot. Trondhjem or Drontheim was the next point where we were to expect letters, and two courses lead to it—either by the open sea outside the shoals and islands, or inland by the network of fjords, longer but infinitely the most interesting, with the further merit of water perfectly smooth. We started at six in the morning and flew on rapidly among tortuous channels, now sweeping through a passage scarcely wider than the yacht's length, now bursting into an archipelago of islets. The western coast of Norway is low and level—a barren undulating country, with the sea flowing freely through the hollows. Here and there are green patches of meadow with a few trees, where there would be a bonder's or yeoman's farm. Prettily painted lighthouses with their red roofs marked our course for us, and a girl or two would come out upon the balconies to look at us as we rushed by within a gun-shot. Eider-ducks flashed out of the water, the father of the family as usual the first to fly, and leaving wife and children to take care of themselves. Fishing-boats crossed us at intervals, and now and then a whale spouted: other signs of life there were none. Towards midday we entered the Sogne Fjord; we turned eastward towards the great mountain ranges; and, as in the fairy tale the rock opens to the Enchanted Prince, and he finds himself amidst gardens and palaces, so, as we ran on seemingly upon an impenetrable wall, cliff and crag fell apart, and we entered on what might be described as an infinite extension of Loch Lomond, save only that the mountains were far grander, the slopes more densely wooded, and that, far up, we

were looking on the everlasting snow, or the green glitter of the glaciers.

On either side of us, as we steamed on, we crossed the mouths of other fjords, lateral branches precisely like the parent trunk, penetrating, as we could see upon our chart, for tens of miles. Norse history grew intelligible as we looked at them. Here were the hiding-places where the vikings, wickelings, hole-and-corner pirates, ran in with their spoils; and here was the explanation of their roving lives. The few spots where a family could sustain itself on the soil are scattered at intervals of leagues. The woods are silent and desolate; wild animals of any kind we never saw; hunting there could have been none. The bears have increased since the farming introduced sheep; but a thousand years ago, save a few reindeer and a few grouse and ptarmigan, there was nothing which would feed either bear or man. Few warm-blooded creatures, furred or feathered, can endure the winter cold. A population cannot live by fish alone, and thus the Norsemen became rovers by necessity, and when summer came they formed in fleets and went south to seek their sustenance. The pine forests were their arsenal; their vessels were the best and fastest in the world; the water was their only road; they were boatmen and seamen by second nature, and the sea-coasts within reach of a summer outing were their natural prey.

We were looking for an anchoring-place where there was a likelihood of fishing; we had seen an inlet on the chart, turning out of the Sogne, which looked promising. At the upper end two rivers appeared to run into it out of freshwater lakes close by; conditions likely to yield salmon. It was our first experiment. A chart is flat. Imagination, unenlightened by experience, had pictured the fjord ending in level meadows, manageable streams winding through them, and, beyond, perhaps some Rydal or Grasmere lying tranquil among its hills. The pilot said that he knew the place, but could give us no description of it. Anticipation generally makes mistakes on such occasions, but never were fact and fancy more startlingly at variance. Lord Salisbury advised people to study geography on large maps. Flat charts are more convenient than models of a country in relief, but they are treacherous misleaders. Grand as the Sogne had been, the inlet where we struck into it was grander still. The forests on the shores were denser, the slopes steeper, the cliffs and peaks soaring up in more stupendous majesty. We ran on thus for eight or ten miles; then, turning round a projecting spur, we

found ourselves in a landlocked estuary smooth as a mirror, the mountains on one side of it beautiful in evening sunlight, on the other darkening the water with their green purple shadows; at the far extremity, which was still five miles from us, a broad white line showed, instead of our 'meadow stream,' where a mighty torrent was pouring in a cataract over the face of a precipice into the sea.

At the foot of this fall, not three hundred yards from it (no bottom was to be found at a greater distance), we anchored half an hour later, and looked about us. We were in the heart of a primitive Norwegian valley, buried among mountains so lofty and so unbroken that no road had ever entered, or could enter, it. It was the first of many which we saw afterwards of the same type, and one description will serve for all.

We were in a circular basin at the head of a fjord. In front of us was a river as large as the Clyde rushing out of a chasm a thousand feet above us, and plunging down in boiling foam. Above this chasm, and inaccessible, was one of the lakes which we had seen on the chart, and in which we had expected to catch salmon. The mountains round were, as usual, covered with wood. At the foot of the fall, and worked by part of it, was a large saw-mill with its adjoining sheds and buildings. The pines were cut as they were wanted, floated to the mill and made into planks, vessels coming at intervals to take them away. The Norwegians are accused of wasting their forests with these mills. We could see no signs of it. In the first place, the sides of the fjords are so steep that the trees can be got at only in comparatively few places. When they can be got at, there is no excessive destruction; more pines are annually swept away by avalanches than are consumed by all the mills in Norway; and the quantity is so enormous that the amount which men can use is no more likely to exhaust it than the Loch Fyne fishermen are likely to exhaust the herring shoals.

On the other side of the basin where we lay was the domain of the owner of the mill. Though the fjord ended, the great ravine in which it was formed stretched, as we could see, a couple of miles further, but it had been blocked by a moraine which stretched across it. The moraines, being formed of loose soil and stones deposited by ice in the glacial period, are available for cultivation and are indeed excellent land. There were forty or fifty acres of grass laid up for hay, a few acres of potatoes, a red-roofed sunny farmhouse with large outbuildings, carts and horses moving about, poultry crowing, cattle grazing, a boathouse

and platform where a couple of lighters were unloading. Here was the house of a substantial, prosperous bonder. His nearest neighbour must have been twelve miles from him. He, his children, and farm-servants were the sole occupants of the valley. The saw-mill was theirs; the boats were theirs; their own hands supplied everything which they wanted. They were their own carpenters, smiths, masons, and glaziers; they sheared their own sheep, spun and dyed their own wool, wove their own cloth, and cut and sewed their own dresses. It was a true specimen of primitive Norwegian life complete in itself—of peaceful, quiet, self-sufficient, prosperous industry.

The snake that spoiled Paradise had doubtless found its way into Nord Gulen (so our valley was named) as into other places, but a softer, sweeter-looking spot we had none of us ever seen. It was seven in the evening when we anchored; a skiff came off, rowed by a couple of plain, stout girls with offers of eggs and milk. Fishing lines were brought out as soon as the anchor was down. The surface water was fresh, and icy cold as coming out of the near glaciers; but it was salt a few fathoms down, and almost immediately we had a basket of dabs and whiting.

After dinner, at nine o'clock, with the sun still shining, X—— and I went ashore with our trout rods. We climbed the moraine, and a narrow lake lay spread out before us, perfectly still, the sides steep, in many places precipitous, trees growing wherever a root could strike. The lake was three miles long, and seemed to end against the foot of a range of mountains 5,000 feet high, the peaks of which, thickly covered with snow, were flushed with the crimson light of the evening. The surface of the water was spotted with rings where the trout were rising. One of the bonder's boys, who had followed us, offered his boat. It was of native manufacture, and not particularly watertight, but we stowed ourselves, one in the bow and the other in the stern. The boy had never seen such rods as ours; he looked incredulously at them, and still more at our flies; but he rowed us to the top of the lake, where a river came down out of the snow-mountain, finishing its descent with a leap over a cliff. Here he told us there were trout if we could catch them; and he took us deliberately into the spray of the waterfall, not understanding, till we were nearly wet through, that we had any objection to it. As the evening went on the scene became every minute grander and more glorious. The sunset colours deepened; a crag just over us, 2,000 feet high, stood out clear and sharp against the sky. We stayed for two or

three hours, idly throwing our flies and catching a few trout no longer than our hands, thereby confirming evidently our friend's impression of our inefficiency. At midnight we were in the yacht again—midnight, and it was like a night in England at the end of June five minutes after sunset.

This was our first experience of a Norway fjord, and for myself I would have been content to go no further; have studied in detail the exquisite beauty which was round us; have made friends with the bonder and his household, and found out what they made of their existence under such conditions. There in epitome would have been seeing Norway and the Norwegians. It was no Arcadia of piping shepherds. In the summer the young men are away at the mountain farms, high grazing ground underneath the snow line. The women work with their brothers and husbands, and weave and make the clothes. They dress plainly, but with good taste, with modest embroidery; a handsome bag hangs at the waist of the housewife. There is reading, too, and scholarship. A boy met us on a pathway, and spoke to us in English. We asked him when he had been in England. He had never been beyond his own valley; in the long winter evenings he had taught himself with an English grammar. No wonder that with such ready adaptabilities they make the best of emigrants. The overflow of population which once directed itself in such rude fashion on Normandy and England now finds its way to the United States, and no incomers are more welcome there.

But a steam yacht is for movement and change. We were to start again at noon the next day. The morning was hot and bright. While the engineer was getting up steam, we rowed to the foot of the great fall. I had my small trout rod with me, and trolled a salmon fly on the chance. There were no salmon there, but we saw brown trout rising; so I tried the universal favourites—a March brown and a red spinner—and in a moment had a fish that bent the rod double. Another followed, and another, and then I lost a large one. I passed the rod to X—, in whose hands it did better service. In an hour we had a basket of trout that would have done credit to an English chalk stream. The largest was nearly three pounds weight, admirably grown, and pink; fattened, I suppose, on the mussels which paved the bottom of the rapids. We were off immediately after, still guided to a new point by the chart, but not in this instance by the chart only. There was a spot which had been discovered the year before by

the Duke of —, of which we had a vague description. We had a log on board which had been kept by the Duke's mate, in which he had recorded many curious experiences; among the rest, an adventure at a certain lake not very far from where we were. The Duke had been successful there, and his lady had been very nearly successful. 'We had grief yesterday,' the mate wrote, 'her Grace losing a twelve-pound salmon which she had caught on her little line, and just as they were going to hook it, it went off, and we were very sorry.' The grief went deep, it seemed, for the next day the crew were reported as only 'being as well as could be expected after so melancholy an accident.' We determined to find the place, and, if possible, avenge her Grace. We crossed the Sogne and went up into the Nord Fjord—of all the fjords the most beautiful; for on either side there are low terraces of land left by glacier action, and more signs of culture and human habitations. After running for fifty miles, we turned into an inlet corresponding tolerably with the Duke's directions, and in another half-hour we were again in a mountain basin like that which we had left in the morning. The cataracts were in their glory, the day having been warm for a wonder. I counted seventeen all close about us when we anchored, any one of which would have made the fortune of a Scotch hotel, and would have been celebrated by Mr. Murray in pages of passionate eloquence. But Strömen or 'the Streams,' as the place was called, was less solitary than Nord Gulen. There was a large bonder's farm on one side of us. There was a cluster of houses at the mouth of a river, half a mile from it. Above the village was a lake, and at the head of the lake an establishment of saw-mills. A gun-shot from where we lay, on a rocky knoll, was a white wooden church, the Sunday meeting-place of the neighbourhood; boats coming to it from twenty miles round bringing families in their bright Sunday attire. Roads there were none. To have made a league of road among such rocks and precipices would have cost the State a year's revenue. But the water was the best of approaches, and boats the cheapest of carriages. We called on the chief bonder to ask for leave to fish in the lake. It was granted with the readiest courtesy; but the Norsemen are proud in their way, and do not like the Englishman's habit of treating all the world as if it belonged to him. The low meadows round his house were bright with flowers: two kinds of wild geranium, an exquisite variety of harebell, sea-pride, pansies, violets, and the great pinguicula. Among the rocks were foxgloves in full splendour, and

wild roses just coming into flower. The roses alone of the Norway flora disappointed me; the leaves are large, dark, and handsome; the flower is insignificant, and falls to pieces within an hour of its opening. We were satisfied that we were on the right spot. The church stood on a peninsula, the neck of which immediately adjoined our anchorage. Behind it was the lake which had been the scene of the Duchess's misfortune. We did not repeat our midnight experiment. We waited for a leisurely breakfast. Five of the crew then carried the yacht's cutter through fifty yards of bushes; and we were on the edge of the lake itself, which, like all these inland waters, was glassy, still, deep, and overhung with precipices. The bonder had suggested to us that there were bears among them, which we might kill if we pleased, as they had just eaten seven of his sheep. So little intention had we of shooting bears that we had not brought rifle or even gun with us. Our one idea was to catch the Duchess's twelve-pound salmon, or, if not that one, at least another of his kindred.

In a strange lake it is well always to try first with spinning tackle, a bait trolled with a long line from the stern of a boat rowed slowly. It will tell you if there are fish to be caught; it will find out for you where the fish most haunt, if there are any. We had a curious experience of the value of this method on a later occasion, and on one of our failures. We had found a lake joined to an arm of a fiord by a hundred yards only of clear running water. We felt certain of finding salmon there, and if we had begun with flies we might have fished all day and have caught nothing. Instead of this we began to spin. In five minutes we had a run; we watched eagerly to see what we had got. It was a whiting pollock. We went on. We hooked a heavy fish. We assured ourselves that now we had at least a trout. It turned out to be a cod. The sea fish, we found, ran freely into the fresh water, and had chased trout and salmon completely out. At Strömen we were in better luck. We started with phantom minnows on traces of strong single gut, forty yards of line, and forty more in reserve on the reel. Two men rowed us up the shore an oar's length from the rocks. Something soon struck me. The reel flew round, the line spun out. In the wake of the boat there was a white flash, as a fish sprang into the air. Was it the Duchess's salmon? It was very like it, any way; and if we had lost him, it would have been entered down as a salmon. It proved, however, to be no salmon, but a sea trout, and such a sea trout as we had never seen; not a bull trout, not a peel, not a Welsh sewin, or Irish

white trout, but a Norwegian, of a kind of its own, different from all of them. It was the first of many which followed, of sizes varying from three pounds to the twelve pounds which the mate had recorded; fine, bold, fighting fish, good to look at, good to catch, and as good to eat when we tried them. Finally in the shallower water, at the upper end, a fish took me, which from its movements was something else, and proved to be a large char, like what they take in Derwentwater, only four times the weight. Looking carefully at the water we saw more char swimming leisurely near the surface, taking flies. We dropped our spinning tackle, and took our fly rods; and presently we were pulling in char, the blood royal of the salmonidæ, the elect of all the finned children of the fresh water, as if they had been so many Thames chub.

What need to talk more of fish? The mate's log had guided us well. We caught enough and to spare, and her Grace's wrongs were avenged sufficiently. We landed for our frugal luncheon—dry biscuits and a whisky flask—but we sate in a bed of whortleberries, purple with ripe fruit, by a cascade which ran down out of a snow-field. Horace would have invited his dearest friend to share in such a banquet.

The next day was Sunday. The sight of the boats coming from all quarters to church was very pretty. Fifteen hundred people at least must have collected. I attended the service, but could make little of it. I could follow the hymns with a book; but copies of the Liturgy, though printed, are not provided for general use, and are reserved to the clergy. The faces of the men were extremely interesting. There was nothing in them to suggest the old freebooter. They were mild and gentle-looking, with fair skins, fair hair, and light eyes, grey or blue. The expression was sensible and collected, but with nothing about it specially adventurous or daring. The women, in fact, were more striking than their husbands. There was a steady strength in their features which implied humour underneath. Two girls, I suppose sisters, reminded me of Mrs. Gaskell. With the Lutheran, Sunday afternoon is a holiday. A yacht in such a place was a curiosity, and a fleet of boats surrounded us. Such as liked came on board and looked about them. They were well bred, and showed no foolish surprise. One old dame, indeed, being taken down into the ladies' cabin, did find it too much for her. She dropped down and kissed the carpet. One of our party wondered afterwards whether there was any chance of the Norwegians attaining

a higher civilisation. I asked her to define civilisation. Did industry, skill, energy, sufficient food and raiment, sound practical education, and piety which believes without asking questions, constitute civilisation; and would luxury, newspapers, and mechanics' institutes mean a higher civilisation? The old question must first be answered, What is the real purpose of human life?

At Strömen, too, we could not linger; we stopped a few hours at Daviken on our way north, a considerable place for Norway, on the Nord Fjord. There is a bishop, I believe, belonging to it, but him we did not see. We called at the parsonage and found the pastor's wife and children. The pastor himself came on board afterwards—a handsome man of sixty-seven, with a broad, full forehead, large nose, and straight grizzled hair. He spoke English, and would have spoken Latin if we had ourselves been equal to it. He had read much English literature, and was cultivated above the level of our own average country clergy. His parish was thirty miles long on both sides of the fjord. He had several churches, to all of which he attended in turn, with boats in summer, and I suppose the ice in winter. We did not ask his salary; it was doubtless small, but sufficient. He had a school under him which he said was well attended. The master, who had a State certificate, was allowed 25*l.* a year, on which he was able to maintain himself. We could not afford time to see more of this gentleman, however. We were impatient for Trondhjem; the engineer wanted coals; we wanted our letters and newspapers; and the steward wanted a washerwoman. On our way up, too, we had arranged to give a day or two to Romsdal, Rolf the Ganger's country—on an island in Romsdal Fjord the ruins can still be seen of Rolf's Castle. It was there that Rolf, or Rollo as we call him, set out with his comrades to conquer Normandy, and produce the chivalry who fought at Hastings and organised feudal England. This was not to be missed; and as little, a visit which we had promised to a descendant of one of those Normans, a distinguished Tory member of the House of Commons, and lord of half an English county. He had bought an estate in these parts, with a salmon river, and had built himself a house there.

Romsdal, independent of its antiquarian interest, is geologically the most remarkable place which we saw in Norway. The fjord expands into a wide estuary or large inland lake, into which many valleys open and several large streams discharge

themselves. Romsdal proper was once evidently itself a continuation of the Great Fjord. The mountains on each side of it are peculiarly magnificent. On the left Romsdal's Horn shoots up into the sky, a huge peak which no one has ever climbed, and will try the mettle of the Alpine Club when they have conquered Switzerland. On the right is a precipitous wall of cliffs and crags as high and bold as the Horn itself. The upper end of the valley which divides them terminates in a narrow fissure, through which a river thunders down that carries the water of the great central icefield into the valley. From thence it finds its way into the fjord, running through the glen itself which is seven or eight miles long, two miles wide, and richly cultivated and wooded. From the sea the appearance of the shore is most singular. It is laid out in level grassy terraces, stretching all round the bay, rising in tiers one above the other, so smooth, so even, so nicely scarfed, that the imagination can hardly be persuaded that they are not the work of human engineers. But under water the formation is the same. At one moment you are in twenty fathoms, the next in forty, the next your cable will find no bottom; and it is as certain as any conclusion on such subjects can be, that long ago, long ages before Rolf, and Knut, and the Vikings, the main fjord was blocked with ice; that while the ice barrier was still standing, and the valleys behind it were fresh-water lakes, the rivers gradually filled them with a *débris* of stone and soil. Each level terrace was once a lake bottom. The ice broke or melted away at intervals. The water was lowered suddenly forty or fifty feet, and the ground lately covered was left bare as the ice receded. We found our Englishman. His house is under the Horn at the bend of the valley, where the ancient fjord must have ended. It stands in a green open meadow, approached through alder and birch woods, the first cataract where the snow-water plunges through the great chasm being in sight of the windows, and half-a-dozen inimitable salmon pools within a few minutes' walk. The house itself was simple enough, made of pine wood entirely, as the Norway houses always are, and painted white. It contained some half-dozen rooms, furnished in the plainest English style, the summer house of a sportsman who is tired of luxury, and finds the absence of it an agreeable exchange. A man cannot be always catching salmon, even in Norway, and a smattering of science and natural history would be a serviceable equipment in a scene where there are so many curious objects worth attending to. Our friend's tastes,

however, did not lie in that direction. His shelves were full of yellow-backed novels—French, English, and German. His table was covered with the everlasting ‘Saturday Review,’ ‘Pall Mall Gazette,’ ‘Times,’ and ‘Standard.’ I think he suspected science as part of modern liberalism; for he was a Tory of the Tories, a man with whom the destinies had dealt kindly, in whose eyes therefore all existing arrangements were as they should be, and those who wished to meddle with them were enemies of the human race. He was sad and sorrowful. The world was not moving to his mind, and he spoke as if he was *ultimus Romanorum*. But if an aristocrat, he was an aristocrat of the best type—princely in his thought, princely in his habits, princely even in his salmon fishing. The pools in the river being divided by difficult rapids, he had a boat and a boatman for each. The sport was ample but uniform. There was an ice cellar under the house where we saw half-a-dozen great salmon lying which had been caught in the morning. One salmon behaves much like another; and after one has caught four or five, and when one knows that one can catch as many more as one wishes, impatient people might find the occupation monotonous. Happily there was a faint element of uncertainty still left. It was possible to fail even in the Romsdal. We were ourselves launched in boats in different pools at the risk of our lives to try our hands; we worked diligently for a couple of hours, and I at least moved not so much as a fin. It was more entertaining a great deal to listen to our host as he declaimed upon the iniquities of our present Radical chief. Politics, like religion, are matters of faith on which reason says as little as possible. One passionate belief is an antidote to another. It is impossible to continue to believe enthusiastically in a creed which a fellow mortal with as much sense as oneself denies and execrates, and the collision of opinion produces the prudent scepticism which in most matters is the least mischievous frame of mind.

Here, too, in these pleasant surroundings we would gladly have loitered for a day or two; but the steward was clamorous over his dirty linen, and it was not to be. Trondhjem, on which our intentions had been so long fixed, was reached at last. The weather had grown cold again, cold with cataracts of rain. Let no one go to Norway even in the dog days without a winter wardrobe. The sea-water in our baths was at 47°; we had fires in the cabin stove, and could not warm ourselves; we shivered under four blankets in our berths. The mountains were buried in clouds,

and the landscape was reduced to a dull grey mist; but the worst of weathers will serve for reading letters, laying in coal, and wandering about a town.

Trondhjem ought to have been interesting. It was the capital of the old Norse kings. There reigned the Olafs. It lies half-way up the Norway coast in the very centre of the kingdom, on a broad landlocked bay. The situation was chosen for its strength; for a deep river all but surrounds the peninsula on which the town is built, and on the land side it must have been impregnable. The country behind it is exceptionally fertile, and is covered over with thriving farms; but streets and shops are wearisome, and even the cathedral did not tempt us to pay it more than a second visit. It is a stern solid piece of building; early Norman in type, with doors, windows, and arches of zigzag pattern. It had fallen out of repair and is now being restored by the State; hundreds of workmen are busy chipping and hammering, and are doing their business so well that the new work can hardly be distinguished from the old. But Catholic Christianity never seems to have got any hearty hold on Norway. St. Olaf thrust it upon the people at the sword's point, but their imaginations remained heathen till the Reformation gave them a creed which they could believe. I could not find a single tomb in the cathedral. I inquired where the old kings and chiefs were buried, and no one could tell me. I found, in fact, that they had usually come to an end in some sea-battle, and had found their graves in their own element. Olaf Tryggveson went down, the last survivor in the last ship of his fleet, the rays of the sunset flashing on his armour as the waves closed over him. St. Olaf died in the same way. The entire absence of monumental stones or figures in the great metropolitan church of Norway is strange, sad, and impressive.

The town being exhausted, we drove a few miles out of it to see a foss, one of the grandest in the country. We said 'Oh!' to it, as Wolfe Tone did to Grattan. But waterfalls had become too common with us, and, in fact, the excitement about them has always seemed exaggerated to me. I was staying once in a house in the north of New York State when a gentleman came in fresh from Niagara, and poured out his astonishment over the enormous mass of water falling into the caldron below. 'Why is it astonishing?' asked a Yankee who was present. 'Why shouldn't the water fall? The astonishing thing would be if it didn't fall.'

In short, we left the washerwoman in possession of the linen,

which we could return and pick up when it was done, and we steamed away to examine the great Trondhjem Fjord; fishing and making bad sketches as the weather would allow. The weather generally allowed us to do very little, and drove us upon our books, which we could have read as well in our rooms at home. I had brought the 'Elective Affinities' with me. I had not read it for thirty years. Then it had seemed to me the wisest of all didactic works. 'Unconscious cerebration,' as Dr. Carpenter calls it, when I read it again, had revolutionised my principles of judgment. I could still recognise the moral purpose. There are tendencies in human nature, like the chemical properties of material substances, which will claim possession of you, and even appear to have a moral right over you. But if you yield you will be destroyed. You can command yourself, and you must. Very true, very excellent; and set forth with Goethe's greatest power of fascination; but I found myself agreeing with the rest of the world that it was a monstrous book after all. To put the taste out I tried Seneca, but I scarcely improved matters. Seneca's fame as a moralist and philosopher was due, perhaps, in the first instance, to his position about the Court, and to his enormous wealth. A little merit passes for a great deal when it is framed in gold—once established it would remain, from the natural liking of men for virtuous cant. Those lectures to Lucilius on the beauty of poverty from the greatest money-lender and usurer in the Empire! Lucilius is to practise voluntary hardships, is to live at intervals on beggars' fare, and sleep on beggars' pallets, that he may sympathise in the sufferings of mortality and be independent of outward things. If Seneca meant it, why did he squeeze five millions of our money out of the provinces with loans and contracts? He was barren as the Sahara to me. Not a green spot could I find, not a single genial honest thought, in all the four volumes with which I had encumbered myself. His finest periods rang hollow like brass sovereigns. The rain would not stop, so we agreed to defy the rain and to fish in spite of it. We had the fjord before us for a week, and we landed wherever we could hear of lake or river. For twelve hours together the waterspout would come down upon us; we staggered about in thickest woollen, with macintoshes and indiarubber boots. With flapped oilskin hats we should have been weatherproof, but with one of these I was unprovided; and, in spite of collars and woollen wrappers, the water would find its way down our necks till there was nothing dry left about us but the feet. Clothes grow heavy under such

conditions; we had to take our lightest rods with us, and now and then came to grief. I was fishing alone one day in a broad rocky stream fringed with alder bushes, dragging my landing net along with me. At an open spot where there was a likely run within reach I had caught a four-pound sea trout. I threw again; a larger fish rose and carried off my fly. I mounted a 'doctor,' blue and silver, on the strongest casting line in my book, and on the second cast a salmon came. The river in the middle was running like a mill-sludge. I could not follow along the bank for the trees; my only hope was to hold on and drag the monster into the slack water under the shore. My poor little rod did its best, but its best was not enough; the salmon found his way into the waves, round went the reel, off flew the line to the last inch, and then came the inevitable catastrophe. The fish sprang wildly into the air, the rod straightened out, the line came home, and my salmon and my bright doctor sped away together to the sea.

We were none the worse for our wettings. Each evening we came home dripping and dragged. A degree or two more of cold would have turned the rain into snow. Yet it signified nothing. We brought back our basketfuls of trout, and the Norwegian trout are the best in the world. We anchored one evening in a chasm with the mountain walls rising in precipices on both sides. The next morning as I was lying in my berth I heard a conversation between the steward and the captain. The captain asked the orders for the day; the steward answered (he was the wit of the ship), 'Orders are to stretch an awning over the fjord that his lordship may fish.'

But the weather so far beat us that we were obliged to abandon Lofoden. We were now at the end of July, and it was not likely to mend, so we determined to turn about and spend the rest of our time in the large fjords of South Norway. Trondhjem had been our furthest point; we could not coal there after all, so we had to make for Christiansund on the way. I was not sorry for it, for Christiansund is a curious little bustling place, and worth seeing. It is the head-quarters of the North Sea fishing trade near the open ocean, and the harbour is formed by three or four islands divided by extremely narrow channels, with a deep roomy basin in the middle of them. One of our crew was ill and had to be taken for two or three days to the hospital. The arrangements seemed excellent, as every public department is in Norway. The town was pretty. The Norwegians dress plainly; but they like bright colours for their houses, and the red-tiled

roofs and blue and yellow painted fronts looked pleasant after our clouds of mist. The climate from the proximity of the ocean is said to be mild for its latitude. The snow lies up to the lower windows through the winter, but that went for nothing. There were stocks and columbines in the gardens; there were ripe gooseberries and red currants and pink thorn and laburnum in flower. The harbour was full of fishing smacks, like Brixham trawlers, only rather more old-fashioned. Gay steam-ferry boats rushed about from island to island; large ships were loading; well-dressed strangers were in the streets and shops; an English yacht had come like ourselves to take in coal, and was moored side by side with us. There are fewer people in the world than we imagine, and we fall on old acquaintances when we least expect them. The once beautiful — was on board whom I had known forty-five years ago. She had married a distinguished engineer, who was out for his holiday.

We stayed at Christiansund or in the neighbourhood till our sick man was recovered, and then followed (under better auspices as regarded weather) ten days of scenery hunting which need not be described. We went to Sondal, Lærdal, Nordal, and I don't know how many 'dals,' all famous places in their way, but with a uniformity of variety which becomes tedious in a story. One only noticeable feature I observed about the sheds and poorer houses in these out-of-the-way districts. They lay turf sods over the roofs, which become thick masses of vegetation; and on a single cottage roof you may see half-a-dozen trees growing ten or fifteen feet high. For lakes and mountains, however beautiful, the appetite becomes soon satiated. They please, but they cease to excite; and there is something artificial in the modern enthusiasm for landscapes. Velasquez or Rubens could appreciate a fine effect of scenery as well as Turner or Stansfield; but with them it was a framework, subordinate to some human interest in the centre of the picture. I suppose it is because man in these democratic days has for a time ceased to touch the imagination that our poets and artists are driven back upon rocks and rivers and trees and skies; but the eclipse can only be temporary, and I confess, for myself, that, sublime as the fjords were, the saw-mills and farm-houses and fishing-boats, and the patient, industrious people wrestling a wholesome living out of that stern environment, affected me very much more nearly. I cannot except even the Geiranger, as tremendous a piece of natural architecture as exists in the globe. The fjord in the Geiranger is a quarter of a mile

wide and 600 fathoms deep. The walls of it are in most places not figuratively, but literally, precipices, and the patch of sky above your head seems to narrow as you look up. I hope I was duly impressed with the wonder of this; but even here there was something which impressed me more, and that was the singular haymaking which was going on. The Norwegians depend for their existence on their sheep and cattle. Every particle of grass available for hay is secured; and grass, peculiarly nutritious, often grows on the high ridges 2,000 feet up. This they save as they can, and they have original ways of doing it. In the Geiranger it is tied tightly in bundles and flung over the cliffs to be gathered up in boats below. But science, too, is making its way in this northern wilderness. The farm-houses, for shelter's sake, are always at the bottom of valleys, and are generally near the sea. At one of our anchorages, shut in as usual among the mountains, we observed one evening from the deck what looked like a troop of green goats skipping and bounding down the cliffs. We discovered through a binocular that they were bundles of hay. The clever bonder had carried up a wire, like a telegraph wire, from his courtyard to a projecting point of mountain: on this ran iron rings as travellers which brought the grass directly to his door.

Twice only in our wanderings we had fallen in with our tourist countrymen: once at Lærdal, where a high road comes down to a pier, and is met there by a corresponding steamer; the second time coming down from the Geiranger, when we passed a boat with two ladies and a gentleman, English evidently, the gentleman touching his hat to the Yacht Club flag as we went by. Strange and pleasant the short glimpse of English faces in that wild chasm! But we were plunged into the very middle of our countrymen at the last spot to which we went in search of the picturesque—a spot worth a few words as by far the most regularly beautiful of all the places which we visited. At the head of one of the long inlets which runs south, I think, out of the Hardanger Fjord (but our rapid movements were confusing) stands Odde, once a holy place in Scandinavian mythological history. There is another Odde in Iceland, also sacred—I suppose Odin had something to do with it. The Odde Fjord is itself twenty miles long, and combines the softest and grandest aspects of Norwegian scenery. The shores are exceptionally well cultivated, richer than any which we had seen. Every half-mile some pretty farm-house was shining red through clumps of trees, the many cattle sheds speaking for the wealth of the owner. Above,

through the rifts of higher ranges you catch a sight of the Central Icefield glacier streaming over among the broken chasms and melting into waterfalls. At Odde itself there is an extensive tract of fertile soil on the slope of a vast moraine, which stretches completely across the broad valley. On the sea at the landing-place is a large church and two considerable hotels, which were thronged with visitors. A broad road excellently engineered leads down to it, and we found a staff of English-speaking guides whose services we did not require. We had seen much of the ice action elsewhere, but the performances of it at Odde were more wonderful even than at Romsdal. The moraine is perhaps 450 feet high; the road winds up the side of it among enormous granite boulders, many of them weighing thousands of tons, which the ice has tossed about like pebble stones. On reaching the crest you see a lake a quarter of a mile off; but before you come to it you cross some level fields, very rich to look at, and with patches of white-heart cherry-trees scattered about, the fruit, when we came there at the end of August, being actually ripe and extremely good. These fields were the old lake bottom; but the river has cut a dyke for itself through the top of the moraine, and the lake has gone down some twenty feet, leaving them dry.

The weather (penitent, perhaps, for having so long persecuted us) was in a better humour. Our days at Odde were warm and without a cloud, and we spent them chiefly by the lake, which was soft as Windermere. We had come into a land of fruit; not cherries only, but wild raspberries and strawberries were offered us in leaves by the girls on the road. The road itself followed the lake margin, among softly rounded and wooded hills, the great mountains out of sight behind them, save only in one spot where, through a gorge, you looked straight up to the eternal snow-field, from which a vast glacier descended almost into the lake itself, the ice imitating precisely the form of falling water, crushing its way among the rocks, parting in two where it met a projecting crag, and uniting again behind it, seeming even to heave and toss in angry waves of foam.

From this glacier the lake was chiefly fed, and was blue, like skimmed milk, in consequence. We walked along it for several miles. Fishing seemed hopeless in water of such a texture. As we turned a corner two carriages dashed by us with some young men and dogs and guns—cockneys out for their holiday. 'Any sport, sir?' one of them shouted to me, seeing a rod in my hand, in the cheerful familiar tone which assumed that sport must be

the first and only object which one could have in such a place. They passed on to the hotel, and the presence of so many of our countrymen was inclining us to cut short our own stay. Some of the party, however, wished to inspect the glacier. We were ourselves assured that there were salmon in the lake, which, in spite of the colour, could be caught there. It was the last opportunity which we should have, as after Odde our next move was to be Christiania. So we agreed to take one more day there and make the most of it. We got two native boats, and started to seek adventures. Alas! we had the loveliest views; but the blue waters of Odde, however fair to look upon, proved as ill to fish in as at the first sight of them we were assured they must be. Our phantoms could not be seen three inches off, and the stories told us we concluded to be fables invented for the tourists. I, for my own part, had gone to the furthest extremity of the lake, where it ended in a valley like Borrodale. I was being rowed listlessly back, having laid aside my tackle, and wishing that I could talk to my old boatman, who looked as if all the stories of the Edda were inside him, when my eye was suddenly caught by a cascade coming down out of a ravine into the lake which had not been bred in the glaciers, and was limpid as the Itchen itself. At the mouth of this it was just possible that there might be a char or something with fins that could see to rise. It was my duty to do what I could for the yacht's cuisine. I put together my little trout rod for a last attempt, and made my boatman row me over to it. The clear water was not mixing with the blue, but pushing its way through the milky masses, which were eddying and rolling as if they were oil. In a moment I had caught a sea trout. Immediately after I caught a second, and soon a basketful. They had been attracted by the purer liquid, and were gathered there in a shoal. They were lying with their noses up the stream at the furthest point to which they could go. I got two or three, and those the largest, by throwing my fly against the rocks exactly at the fall. X—— came afterwards and caught more and bigger fish than I did; and our sport, which indeed we had taken as it came without specially seeking for it, was brought to a good end. The end of August was come, and with it the period of our stay in the fjords. We had still to see Christiania, and had no time to lose. But of all the bits of pure natural loveliness which we had fallen in with, Odde and its blue lake, and glacier, and cherry orchards, and wild strawberries has left the fairest impression; perhaps, however, only because it was the last, for we were

going home; and they say that when a man dies, the last image which he has seen is photographed on his retina.

But now away. The smoke pours through the funnel. The steam is snorting like an impatient horse. The quick rattle of the cable says that the anchor is off the ground. We were off, and had done with fjords. The inner passages would serve no longer; we had to make for open sea once more to round the foot of the peninsula. It is at no time the softest of voyages. The North Sea is not the home of calm sunsets and light-breathing zephyrs, and it gave us a taste of its quality, which, after our long sojourn in smooth water, was rather startling. If the wind and sea are ever wilder than we found them in those latitudes, I have no desire to be present at the exhibition. We fought the storm for twenty-four hours, and were then driven for refuge into a roadstead at the southern extremity of Norway near Mandal. The neighbourhood was interesting, if we had known it, for at Mandal Mary Stuart's Earl of Bothwell was imprisoned when he escaped from the Orkneys to Denmark. The dungeon where he was confined is still to be seen, and as the Earl was an exceptional villain, the authentic evidence of eyesight that he had spent an uncomfortable time in his exile would not have been unwelcome. But we discovered what we had lost when it was too late to profit by our information. We amused ourselves by wandering on shore and observing the effect of the change of latitude on vegetation. We found the holly thriving, of which in the north we had not seen a trace, and the hazel bushes had ripe nuts on them. There was still a high sea the next day; but we made thirty miles along the coast to Arendal, an advanced thriving town of modern aspect built in a sheltered harbour, with broad quays, fine buildings, and a gay parade. It was almost dark when we entered; and the brilliant lights and moving crowds and carriages formed a singular contrast to the unfinished scenes of unregenerate nature which we had just left. The Norse nature, too, hard and rugged as it may be, cannot resist the effect of its occupations. Aristotle observes that busy sea towns are always democratic. Norway generally, though Republican, is intensely Conservative. The bonders who elect the representatives walk in the ways of their fathers, and have the strongest objection to new ideas. Arendal, I was told, sends to Parliament an eloquent young Radical, the admired of all the newspapers. There is, I believe, no likelihood that he will bring about a revolution. But there is no knowing when the king is an absentee. We spent one night at Arendal.

In the morning the storm had left us, and before sunset we were at anchor at Christiania. It was Sunday. The weather was warm, the water smooth, the woody islands which surround and shelter the anchorage were glowing in gold and crimson. Christiania, a city of domes and steeples, lay before us with its fleets of steamers and crowded shipping. Hundreds of tiny yachts and pleasure boats were glancing round us. There is no sour Sabbatarianism in Norway. One of the islands is a kind of Cremorne. When night fell the music of the city band came floating over the water; blue lights blazed and rockets flashed into the sky with their flights of crimson stars. It was a scene which we had not expected in these northern regions; but life can have its enjoyments even above the sixtieth parallel.

There is much to be seen in Christiania. There is a Parliament house and a royal palace, and picture galleries and botanical gardens, and a museum of antiquities, and shops where articles of native workmanship can be bought by Englishmen at three times their value, and ancient swords and battleaxes, and drinking horns and rings and necklaces, genuine, at present, for all I know to the contrary, but capable of imitation, and likely in these days of progress to be speedily imitated. If the Holy Coat of Trèves has been multiplied by ten, why should there not be ten swords of Olaf Tryggveson. But all these things are written of in the handbook of Mr. Murray, where the curious can read of them. One real wonder we saw and saw again at Christiania, and could not satisfy ourselves with seeing; and with an account of this I shall end. It was a Viking's ship; an authentic vessel in which, while Norway was still heathen, before St. Olaf drilled his people into Christianity with sword and gallows, a Norse chief and his crew had travelled these same waters, and in which, when he died, he had been laid to rest. It had been covered in with clay which had preserved the timbers. It had been recovered almost entire—the vessel itself, the oars, the boats, the remnants of the cordage, even down to the copper caldron in which he and his men had cooked their dinners; the names, the age, the character of them all buried in the soil, but the proof surviving that they had been the contemporaries and countrymen of the 'Danes' who drove the English Alfred into the marshes of Somersetshire.

Our yacht's company were as eager to see this extraordinary relic as ourselves. We went in a body, and never tired of going. It had been found fifty miles away, had been brought to Christiania, and had been given in charge to the University. A

solid weatherproof shed had been built for it where we could study its structure at our leisure.

The first thing which struck us all was the beauty of the model, as little resembling the old drawings of Norse or Saxon ships as the figures which do duty there as men resemble human beings. White, of Cowes, could not build a vessel with finer lines, or offering less resistance to the water. She was eighty feet long, and seventeen and a half feet beam. She may have drawn three feet, scarcely more, when her whole complement was on board. She was pierced for thirty-two oars, and you could see the marks on the side of the rowlocks where the oars had worn the timber. She had a single mast, stepped in the solid trunk of a tree, which had been laid along the keel. Her knee timbers were strong; but her planks were unexpectedly slight, scarcely more than half an inch thick. They had been formed by careful splitting; there is no sign of the action of a saw, and the ends of them had been trimmed off by the axe. They had been set on and fastened with iron nails, and the seams had been carefully caulked. Deck she had none—a level floor a couple of feet below the gunwale ran from stem to stern. The shields of the crew formed a bulwark, and it was easy to see where they had been fixed. Evidently, therefore, she had been a war-ship; built for fighting, not for carrying cargoes. But there was no shelter, and could have been none; no covered forecastle, no stern cabin. She stood right open fore and aft to wind and waves; and though she would have been buoyant in a sea-way and in the heaviest gale would have shipped little water, even Norsemen could not have been made of such impenetrable stuff that they would have faced the elements with no better protection in any distant expedition. That those who sailed in her were to some extent careful of themselves is accidentally certain. Among the stores was a plank with crossbars nailed upon it, meant evidently for landing on a beach. One of our men, who was quick at inferences, exclaimed at once, ‘These fellows must have worn shoes and stockings. If they had been barelegged they would have jumped overboard and would not have wanted a landing plank.’

I conclude, therefore, that she was not the kind of vessel of which the summer squadrons were composed that came down our English Channel, but that she was intended either for the fjords only, or for the narrow waters between Norway and Sweden and Denmark at the mouth of the Baltic. Her rig must have been precisely what we had been lately seeing on the Sogne or Hardanger; a single large sail on a square yard fit for running before

the wind, or with the wind slightly on the quarter, but useless at a closer point. The rudder hung over the side a few feet from the stern, a heavy oar with a broad blade and a short handle, shaped so exactly like the rudders of the Roman vessels on Trajan's Column, that the Norsemen, it is likely, had seen the pattern somewhere and copied it.

Such is this strange remnant of the old days which has suddenly started into life. So vivid is the impression which it creates, that it is almost as if some Sweyn or Harold in his proper person had come back among us from the grave. If we were actually to see such a man we should be less conscious perhaps of our personal superiority than we are apt to imagine. A law of compensation follows us through our intellectual and mechanical progress. The race collectively knows and can execute immeasurably greater things than the Norsemen. Individually they may have been as ready and intelligent as ourselves. The shipwright certainly who laid the lines of the Viking's galley would have something to teach as well as to learn in the yard of a modern yacht builder.

But enough now of Norway. Our time was out; our tour was over; we seated ourselves once more on our wishing carpet, and desired to be at Cowes; we were transported thither, with the care and almost the speed with which the genius of the lamp transported the palace of Aladdin; and we felt that we had one superiority at least which the Viking would have envied us.

J. A. FROUDE.

A Ghost.

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'MRS. JERNINGHAM'S JOURNAL.'

LOVE, will you let me in ?
I am knocking at the door.

Love, can I shelter win
Close beside you, as of yore ?
Of my grave I am aweary,
Narrow, narrow, dark and dreary ;
Wildly from its clasp I flew,
Love, just to look at you.

I am so white and chill :
Love, will you shrink away ?
If you will not kiss me still
Do not let me in, I pray.
I have cross'd the mighty river :
Will you fear me ? Do you shiver ?
If your arms refuse to woo,
Death is more kind than you.

Love, if *you* were a ghost
And *I* were alive and warm—
Ah, perhaps—I will not boast—
I might shudder at your form ;
I might flee before the presence
Of an unembodied essence.
Hush ! hush ! it is not true,
Love, I should know 'twas *you* !

Sir Hilary's Prayer,

AN UNSOLVED ENIGMA.

THE poetical charades or enigmas of that graceful writer Winthrop Mackworth Praed are widely known. First published in various journals, magazines, and annuals, it is doubtful whether all have yet been recovered. Only nineteen were given in the incomplete first collected edition of Praed's verses—poems they can hardly be called—which appeared in 1853, thanks to the enterprise of an American publisher, Redfield of New York. In 1845-6 fourteen were reproduced in 'Knight's Penny Magazine,' a duodecimo weekly publication which ended with the thirty-second number, completing the second volume. Charles Knight himself contributed to the first volume a notice of the life and writings of Praed, whom, he observes, he had known 'with some degree of intimacy from 1820 to 1828.' The fourteen enigmas are given singly at irregular intervals. In every case the verses, upon the right-hand portion of the page, are accompanied by delicate woodcuts, from designs by the well-known pupil of Haydon and Bewick, William Harvey. These fill the corresponding left-hand space, and supply to each stanza a pictorial suggestion of the word which contributes to or gives the solution. Without such assistance very little penetration is required for the discovery of the answers in every case but one. At page 176 of the second volume the exception appears in 'Enigma No. 12,' which commences with the words, 'Sir Hilary charged at Agincourt,' and is illustrated by designs which neither reveal nor suggest a possible solution. None, we may therefore conclude, was known to the artist or editor; and, as far as the writer is aware, from its first publication to the present time no plausible explanation of the enigma has been offered. In 1864 Mr. Moxon published an enlarged collection of Praed's poetical writings in two volumes, of which the second contains thirty-eight charades. The answers appear in the general index. As the editor had access to the author's original papers, it is very perplexing to find 'Good night' offered as the solution of this enigma, which,

for convenience, may be distinguished as 'Sir Hilary's Prayer,' but which stands simply as No. 3 in the series. This answer, fulfilling no single requirement, one can only suppose to have been inserted at random, no possible explanation having been discovered. In one of the weekly columns of facetiæ, contributed by Albert Smith to the early numbers of the 'Illustrated London News' (1845 or 1846?), the verses are printed as 'An Enigma by Lord Byron which never had any answer.' Some two years since the 'Globe' newspaper, in several successive issues, published communications relative to the problem, but without other result than a consensus of opinion that it was and would remain insoluble. It is difficult to believe, with Albert Smith, that the enigma was a *mauvaise plaisanterie* sent forth by the author as an irritating and fruitless exercise for the mental powers of the ingenious. Certainly it would have been easy for so skilful a verse-writer as Præd to give an appearance of good faith to his lines, and convey the impression that an answer which did not really exist was only cleverly concealed. That he would do so, however, seems to the writer most improbable; and it is still his opinion that the solution which occurred to him five-and-twenty years ago meets every difficulty, requiring only the concession that the obscurity has arisen from the employment of somewhat strained metaphors.

These are the perplexing verses *in extenso* :—

1.

Sir Hilary charged at Agincourt;
 Sooth, 'twas an awful day!
 And tho' in that old age of sport
 The rufflers of the camp and court
 Had little time to pray,
 'Tis said Sir Hilary muttered there
 Two syllables by way of prayer.

2.

' My first to all the brave and proud
 Who see to-morrow's sun;
 My next, with her cold and quiet cloud,
 To those who find their dewy shroud
 Before to-day's be done;
 And both together to all blue eyes
 That weep when a warrior nobly dies.'

The answer, offered with diffidence by the writer in the face of recognised difficulties, is

‘ADIEU,’

as sounded with English pronunciation; and he supposes Praed to have selected as sufficiently corresponding in sound with the respective syllables the words

‘AID—YEW.’

Of the two French words *à Dieu* we have made, in adopting them, one word—‘adieu’—and use it to signify ‘farewell’ rather than with the true meaning ‘to God.’ If it is objected that Praed was too cultivated to employ, even for a *jeu d’esprit*, such pronunciation as aid-yew, another answer may be offered in the words

‘AIDE DIEU’

(God help),

which in sound give as closely as possible what is required.

Aide Dieu appears to have been a familiar battle-cry; and the words transposed, *Dieu aide*, form the motto of two of our noble houses, Mount-Morris and Frankfort.

Taking successively the lines of the charade which conceal the solving words, we have first—

... Sir Hilary muttered there
Two syllables by way of prayer.

Answer—

‘*A Dieu*,’ to God (I commend myself and fellow-soldiers); or

‘*Aide Dieu*,’ God help us.

Next we have—

My first to all the brave and proud
Who see to-morrow’s sun.

Answer—

‘AID.’

So great was the disproportion between the contending armies that the survivors of the little English band might well be expected to require, even if victorious, aid on the morrow.

Continuing, we come to the lines which present real difficulty—

My next, with her cold and quiet cloud,
To those who find their dewy shroud
Before to-day's be done
(*i.e.* to-day's sun).

Answer—

‘YEW.’

This may well appear at first sight very far-fetched ; but is not the only real obstacle the word ‘cloud’? Let ‘cloud’ be taken figuratively for the shade—the chilling shade cast by the gloomy yew tree, which is so constantly associated in prose and verse with the quiet and solemnity of the churchyard, as, for example, in this line from ‘The Pleasures of Memory’—

The churchyard yews, round which his fathers sleep.

Something of this kind may then be assumed as the author's thought:—

‘May burial in the churchyard with Christian rites—poetically, rest beneath the cold and quiet shade of the churchyard yew—be the lot of those whom the evening dew shall bathe as they lie dead on the field after the battle.’

Some collateral support for this interpretation may be claimed from Wordsworth's lines on the famous yew in Lorton Vale, which, connecting the images of the gloomy yew and Agincourt, may *possibly* have suggested the charade:—

There is a yew tree, pride of Lorton Vale,
Which to this day stands single in the midst
Of its own *darkness*, as it stood of yore,
Nor loth to furnish weapons for the hands
Of Umfraville or Percy ere they marched
To Scotland's Heaths ; or those that crossed the seas
And drew their sounding bows at *Azincour*;
Perhaps at earlier Crecy, or Poitiers.
Of vast circumference and *gloom* profound
This solitary tree.

If it is objected that burial in consecrated ground could not have been possible for all the slain, it may be answered that a high officer like ‘Sir Hilary’ would naturally think of his compeers ; and in point of fact great efforts were made to remove, and

secure burial with the rites of the Church for, persons of rank, 'the brave and PROUD,' who fell in battle.

It would be easy to multiply quotations in which the yew and the churchyard are so closely connected as to justify the use of the former as a metaphor for the latter. One such from Gisborne's 'Reflections' will suffice:—

Nor shall thy reverend yew, the sire who holds
His sceptre verdant thro' the changeful year,
Unnoticed stand. He has beheld
Thousands entombed within his shadow.

Finally come the lines—

And both together to all blue eyes
That weep when a warrior nobly dies.

Answer—

'A DIEU,' or 'AIDE DIEU.'

S. T. WHITEFORD.

The Lady's Walk.

A STORY OF THE SEEN AND UNSEEN.

BY MRS. OLIPHANT.

CHAPTER I.

I WAS on a visit to some people in Scotland when the events I am about to relate took place. They were not friends in the sense of long or habitual intercourse; in short, I had met them only in Switzerland in the previous year; but we saw a great deal of each other while we were together, and got into that cosy intimacy which travelling brings about more readily than anything else. We had seen each other in very great *déshabillé* both of mind and array in the chilly mornings after a night's travelling, which perhaps is the severest test that can be applied in respect to looks; and amid all the annoyances of journeys short and long, with the usual episodes of lost luggage, indifferent hotels, fusses of every description, which is an equally severe test for the temper; and our friendship and liking (I am at liberty to suppose it was mutual, or they would never have invited me to Ellermore) remained unimpaired. I have always thought, and still think, that Charlotte Campbell was one of the most charming young women I ever met with; and her brothers, if not so entirely delightful, were nice fellows, capital to travel with, full of fun and spirit. I understood immediately from their conversation that they were members of a large family. Their allusions to Tom and Jack and little Harry, and the children in the nursery, might perhaps have been tedious to a harsher critic; but I like to hear of other people's relations, having scarcely any of my own. I found out by degrees that Miss Campbell had been taken abroad by her brothers to recover from a long and severe task of nursing, which had exhausted her strength. The little ones had all been down with scarlet fever, and she had not left them night or day. 'She gave up seeing the rest of us and regularly shut herself in,' Charley informed me, who was the younger of the two. 'She

would only go out for her walk when all of us were out of the way. That was the worst of it,' the young fellow said, with great simplicity. That his sister should give herself up to the nursing was nothing remarkable; but that she should deny herself their precious company was a heroism that went to her brothers' hearts. Thus, by the way, I learned a great deal about the family. Chatty, as they called her, was the sister-mother, especially of the little ones, who had been left almost in her sole charge since their mother died many years before. She was not a girl, strictly speaking. She was in the perfection of her womanhood and youth—about eight-and-twenty, the age when something of the composure of maturity has lighted upon the sweetness of the earlier years, and being so old enhances all the charm of being so young. It is chiefly among young married women that one sees this gracious and beautiful type, delightful to every sense and every requirement of the mind; but when it is to be met with unmarried it is more celestial still. I cannot but think with reverence that this delicate maternity and maidenhood—the perfect bounty of the one, the undisturbed grace of the other—has been the foundation of that adoring devotion which in the old days brought so many saints to the shrine of the Virgin Mother. But why I should thus enlarge upon Charlotte Campbell at the beginning of this story I can scarcely tell, for she is not in the strict sense of the word the heroine of it, and I am unintentionally deceiving the reader to begin.

They asked me to come and see them at Ellermore when we parted, and, as I have nothing in the way of a home warmer or more genial than chambers in the Temple, I accepted, as may be supposed; with enthusiasm. It was in the first week of June that we parted, and I was invited for the end of August. They had 'plenty of grouse,' Charley said, with a liberality of expression which was pleasant to hear. Charlotte added, 'But you must be prepared for a homely life, Mr. Temple, and a very quiet one.' I replied, of course, that if I had chosen what I liked best in the world it would have been this combination: at which she smiled with an amused little shake of her head. It did not seem to occur to her that she herself told for much in the matter. What they all insisted upon was the 'plenty of grouse;' and I do not pretend to say that I was indifferent to that.

Colin, the eldest son, was the one with whom I had been least familiar. He was what people call reserved. He did not talk of everything as the others did. I did not indeed find out till much

later that he was constantly in London, coming and going, so that he and I might have seen much of each other. Yet he liked me well enough. He joined warmly in his brother's invitation. When Charley said there was plenty of grouse, he added with the utmost friendliness, 'And ye may get a blaze at a stag.' There was a flavour of the North in the speech of all; not disclosed by mere words, but by an occasional diversity of idiom and change of pronunciation. They were conscious of this and rather proud of it than otherwise. They did not say Scotch, but Scots; and their accent could not be represented by any of the travesties of the theatre, or what we conventionally accept as the national utterance. When I attempted to pronounce after them, my own ear informed me what a travesty it was.

It was to the family represented by these young people that I was going when I started on August 20, a blazing summer day, with dust and heat enough to merit the name of summer if anything ever did. But when I arrived at my journey's end there was just change enough to mark the line between summer and autumn: a little golden haze in the air, a purple bloom of heather on the hills, a touch here and there upon a stray branch, very few, yet enough to swear by. Ellermore lay in the heart of a beautiful district full of mountains and lochs, within the Highland line, and just on the verge of some of the wildest mountain scenery in Scotland. It was situated in the midst of an amphitheatre of hills, not of any very exalted height, but of the most picturesque form, with peaks and couloirs like an Alpine range in little, all glowing with the purple blaze of the heather, with gleams upon them that looked like snow, but were in reality water, white threads of mountain torrents. In front of the house was a small loch embosomed in the hills, from one end of which ran a cheerful little stream, much intercepted by boulders, and much the brighter for the interruptions, which meandered through the glen and fell into another loch of greater grandeur and pretensions. Ellermore itself was a comparatively new house, built upon a fine slope of lawn over the lake, and sheltered by fine trees—great beeches which would not have done discredit to Berkshire, though that is not what we expect to see in Scotland: besides the ashes and firs which we are ready to acknowledge as of northern growth. I was not prepared for the luxuriance of the West Highlands—the mantling green of ferns and herbage everywhere, not to say the wealth of flowers, which formed a centre of still more brilliant colour and cultivation amid all the purple of the hills.

Everything was soft and rich and warm about the Highland mansion-house. I had expected stern scenery and a grey atmosphere. I found an almost excessive luxuriance of vegetation and colour everywhere. The father of my friends received me at a door which was constantly open, and where it seemed to me after a while that nobody was ever refused admission. He was a tall old man, dignified but homely, with white hair and moustache and the fresh colour of a rural patriarch, which, however, he was not, but an energetic man of business, as I afterwards found. The Campbells of Ellermore were not great chiefs in that much-extended clan, but they were perfectly well known people and had held their little estate from remote antiquity. But they had not stood upon their gentility, or refused to avail themselves of the opportunities that came in their way. I have observed that in the great and wealthy region of which Glasgow is the capital the number of the irreconcilables who stand out against trade is few. The gentry have seen all the advantages of combining commerce with tradition. Had it not been for this it is likely that Ellermore would have been a very different place. Now it was overflowing with all those signs of ease and simple luxury which make life so smooth. There was little show, but there was a profusion of comfort. Everything rolled upon velvet. It was perhaps more like the house of a rich merchant than of a family of long descent. Nothing could be more perfect as a pleasure estate than was this little Highland property. They had 'plenty of grouse,' and also of trout in a succession of little lochs and mountain streams. They had deer on the hills. They had their own mutton, and everything vegetable that was needed for the large profuse household, from potatoes and cabbage up to grapes and peaches. But with all this primitive wealth there was not much money got out of Ellermore. The 'works' in Glasgow supplied that. What the works were I have never exactly found out, but they afforded occupation for all the family, both father and sons; and that the results were of the most pleasing description as regarded Mr. Campbell's banker it was easy to see.

They were all at home with the exception of Colin, the eldest son, for whose absence many apologies, some of which seemed much more elaborate than were at all necessary, were made to me. I was for my own part quite indifferent to the absence of Colin. He was not the one who had interested me most; and though Charley was considerably younger than myself, I had liked him better from the first. Tom and Jack were still younger. They

were all occupied at 'the works,' and came home only from Saturday to Monday. The little trio in the nursery were delightful children. To see them gathered about Charlotte was enough to melt any heart. Chatty they called her, which is not a very dignified name, but I got to think it the most beautiful in the world as it sounded all over that cheerful, much-populated house. 'Where is Chatty?' was the first question everyone asked as he came in at the door. If she was not immediately found it went volleying through the house, all up the stairs and through the passages—'Chatty! where are you?'—and was always answered from somewhere or other in a full soft voice, which was audible everywhere though it never was loud. 'Here am I, boys,' she would say, with a pretty inversion which pleased me. Indeed, everything pleased me in Chatty—too much, more than reason. I found myself thinking what would become of them all if, for example, she were to marry, and entered into a hot argument with myself on one occasion by way of proving that it would be the most selfish thing in the world were this family to work upon Chatty's feelings and prevent her from marrying, as most probably, I could not help feeling, they would. At the same time I perceived with a little shudder how entirely the whole thing would collapse if by any chance Chatty should be decoyed away.

I enjoyed my stay beyond description. In the morning we were out on the hills or about the country. In the evening it very often happened that we all strolled out after dinner, and that I was left by Chatty's side, 'the boys' having a thousand objects of interest, while Mr. Campbell usually sat in his library and read the newspapers, which arrived at that time either by the coach from Oban or by the boat. In this way I went over the whole 'policy,' as the grounds surrounding a country house are called in Scotland, with Chatty, who would not be out of reach at this hour, lest her father should want her, or the children. She would bid me not to stay with her when no doubt it would be more amusing for me to go with the boys; and when I assured her my pleasure was far greater as it was, she gave me a gracious, frank smile, with a little shake of her head. She laughed at me softly, bidding me not to be too polite or think she would mind if I left her; but I think, on the whole, she liked to have me with her in her evening walk.

'There is one thing you have not told me of,' I said, 'and that you must possess. I cannot believe that your family has been settled here so long without having a ghost.'

She had turned round to look at me, to know what it was that had been omitted in her descriptions. When she heard what it was she smiled a little, but not with the pleasant mockery I had expected. On the contrary, it was a sort of gentle smile of recognition that something had been left out.

'We don't call it a ghost,' she said. 'I have wondered if you had never noticed. I am fond of it for my part; but then I have been used to it all my life. And here we are, then,' she added as we reached the top of a little ascent and came out upon a raised avenue, which I had known by its name of the Lady's Walk without as yet getting any explanation what that meant. It must have been, I supposed, the avenue to the old house, and now encircled one portion of the grounds without any distinct meaning. On the side nearest the gardens and house it was but slightly raised above the shrubberies, but on the other side was the summit of a high bank sloping steeply to the river, which, after it escaped from the loch, made a wide bend round that portion of the grounds. A row of really grand beeches rose on each side of the path, and through the openings in the trees the house, the bright gardens, the silvery gleam of the loch were visible. The evening sun was slanting into our eyes as we walked along; a little soft yet brisk air was pattering among the leaves, and here and there a yellow cluster in the middle of a branch showing the first touch of a cheerful decay. 'Here we are, then.' It was a curious phrase; but there are some odd idioms in the Scotch—I mean Scots'—form of our common language, and I had become accustomed now to accept them without remark.

'I suppose,' I said, 'there must be some back way to the village or to the farm house under this bank, though there seems no room for a path?'

'Why do you ask?' she said, looking at me with a smile.

'Because I always hear some one passing along—I imagine down there. The steps are very distinct. Don't you hear them now? It has puzzled me a good deal, for I cannot make out where the path can be.'

She smiled again, with a meaning in her smile, and looked at me steadily, listening, as I was. And then, after a pause, she said, 'That is what you were asking for. If we did not hear it, it would make us unhappy. Did you not know why this was called the Lady's Walk?'

When she said these words I was conscious of an odd enough change in my sensations—nay, I should say in my very sense of

hearing, which was the one appealed to. I had heard the sound often, and, after looking back at first to see who it was and seeing no one, had made up my mind that the steps were on some unseen bye-way and heard them accordingly, feeling quite sure that the sound came from below. Now my hearing changed, and I could not understand how I had ever thought anything else: the steps were on a level with us, by our side—as if some third person were accompanying us along the avenue. I am no believer in ghosts, nor the least superstitious, so far as I had ever been aware (more than everybody is), but I felt myself get out of the way with some celerity and a certain thrill of curious sensation. The idea of rubbing shoulders with something unseen startled me in spite of myself.

‘Ah!’ said Charlotte, ‘it gives you an—unpleasant feeling. I forgot you are not used to it like me.’

‘I am tolerably well used to it, for I have heard it often,’ I said, somewhat ashamed of my involuntary movement. Then I laughed, which I felt to be altogether out of place and fictitious, and said, ‘No doubt there is some very easy explanation of it—some vibration or echo. The science of acoustics clears up many mysteries.’

‘There is no explanation,’ Chatty said, almost angrily. ‘She has walked here far longer than anyone can remember. It is an ill sign for us Campbells when she goes away. She was the eldest daughter, like me; and I think she has got to be our guardian angel. There is no harm going to happen as long as she is here. Listen to her,’ she cried, standing still with her hand raised. The low sun shone full on her, catching her brown hair, the lucid clearness of her brown eyes, her cheeks so clear and soft, in colour a little summer-brown, too. I stood and listened with a something of excited feeling which I could not control: the sound of this third person, whose steps were not to be mistaken though she was unseen, made my heart beat: if, indeed, it was not merely the presence of my companion, who was sweet enough to account for any man’s emotion.

‘You are startled,’ she said with a smile.

‘Well! I should not be acting my part, should I, as I ought, if I did not feel the proper thrill? It must be disrespectful to a ghost not to be afraid.’

‘Don’t say a ghost,’ said Chatty; ‘I think *that* is disrespectful. It is the Lady of Ellermore; everybody knows about her. And do you know,’ she added, ‘when my mother died—the greatest grief

I have ever known—the steps ceased? Oh! it is true! You need not look me in the face as if there was anything to laugh at. It is ten years ago, and I was only a silly sort of girl, not much good to anyone. They sent me out to get the air when she was lying in a doze; and I came here. I was crying, as you may suppose, and at first I did not pay any attention. Then it struck me all at once—the Lady was away. They told me afterwards that was the worst sign. It is always death that is coming when she goes away.'

The pathos of this incident confused all my attempts to touch it with levity, and we went on for a little without speaking, during which time it is almost unnecessary to say that I was listening with all my might to those strange footsteps, which finally I persuaded myself were no more than echoes of our own.

'It is very curious,' I said politely. 'Of course you were greatly agitated and too much absorbed in real grief to have any time to think of the other: and there might be something in the state of the atmosphere——'

She gave me an indignant look. We were nearly at the end of the walk; and at that moment I could have sworn that the footsteps, which had got a little in advance, here turned and met us going back. I am aware that nothing could sound more foolish, and that it must have been some vibration or atmospheric phenomenon. But yet this was how it seemed—not an optical but an aural delusion. So long as the steps were going with us it was less impossible to account for it; but when they turned and audibly came back to meet us! Not all my scepticism could prevent me from stepping aside to let them pass. This time they came directly between us, and the naturalness of my withdrawal out of the way was more significant than the faltering laugh with which I excused myself. 'It is a very curious sound indeed,' I said with a tremor which slightly affected my voice.

Chatty gave me a reassuring smile. She did not laugh at me, which was consolatory. She stood for a moment as if looking after the visionary passenger. 'We are not afraid,' she said, 'even the youngest; we all know she is our friend.'

When we had got back to the side of the loch, where, I confess, I was pleased to find myself, in the free open air without any perplexing shadow of trees, I felt less objection to the subject. 'I wish you would tell me the story; for of course there is a story,' I said.

'No, there is no story—at least nothing tragical or even romantic. They say she was the eldest daughter. I sometimes wonder,' Chatty said with a smile and a faint increase of colour, 'whether she might not be a little like me. She lived here all her life, and had several generations to take care of. Oh no, there was no murder or wrong about our Lady; she just loved Ellermore above everything; but my idea is that she has been allowed the care of us ever since.'

'That is very sweet, to have the care of you,' I said, scarcely venturing to put any emphasis on the pronoun; 'but, after all, it must be slow work, don't you think, walking up and down there for ever? I call that a poor sort of reward for a good woman. If she had been a bad one it might have answered very well for a punishment.'

'Mr. Temple!' Chatty said, now reddening with indignation, 'do you think it is a poor thing to have the care of your own people, to watch over them, whatever may happen—to be all for them and their service? I don't think so; I should like to have such a fate.'

Perhaps I had spoken thus on purpose to bring about the discussion. 'There is such a thing as being too devoted to your family. Are they ever grateful? They go away and marry and leave you in the lurch.'

She looked up at me with a little astonishment. 'The members may vary, but the family never goes away,' she said; 'besides, that can apply to us in our present situation only. *She* must have seen so many come and go; but that need not vex her, you know, because they go where she is.'

'My dear Miss Campbell, wait a bit, think a little,' I said: 'where she is! That is in the Lady's Walk, according to your story. Let us hope that all your ancestors and relations are not there.'

'I suppose you want to make me angry,' said Chatty. 'She is in heaven—have you any doubt of that?—but every day when the sun is setting she comes back home.'

'Oh, come!' I said, 'if it is only at the sunset that is not so bad.'

Miss Campbell looked at me doubtfully, as if not knowing whether to be angry. 'You want to make fun of it,' she said, 'to laugh at it; and yet,' she added with a little spirit, 'you were rather nervous half an hour ago.'

'I acknowledge to being nervous. I am very impressionable.

I believe that is the word. It is a luxury to be nervous at the fit moment. Frightened you might say, if you prefer plain speaking. And I am very glad it is at sunset, not in the dark. This completes the round of my Highland experiences,' I said; 'everything now is perfect. I have shot grouse on the hill and caught trout on the loch, and been soaked to the skin and then dried in the wind; I wanted nothing but the family ghost. And now I have seen her, or at least heard her——'

'If you are resolved to make a joke of it I cannot help it,' said Chatty, 'but I warn you that it is not agreeable to me, Mr. Temple. Let us talk of something else. In the Highlands,' she said with dignity, 'we take different views of many things.'

'There are some things,' I said, 'of which but one view is possible—that I should have the audacity and impertinence to laugh at anything for which you have a veneration! I believe it is only because I was so frightened——'

She smiled again in her lovely motherly way, a smile of indulgence and forgiveness and bounty. 'You are too humble now,' she said, 'and I think I hear some one calling me. It is time to go in.'

And to be sure there was some one calling her: there always was, I think, at all hours of the night and day.

CHAPTER II.

To say that I got rid of the recollection of the Lady of Ellermore when I went upstairs after a cheerful evening through a long and slippery gallery to my room in the wing would be untrue. The curious experience I had just had dwelt in my mind with a feeling of not unpleasant perplexity. Of course, I said to myself, there must be something to account for those footsteps—some hidden way in which the sounds could come. Perhaps my first idea would turn out to be correct—that there was a bye-road to the farm, or to the stables, which in some states of the atmosphere—or perhaps it might even be always—echoed back the sounds of passing feet in some subterranean vibration. One has heard of such things; one has heard, indeed, of every kind of natural wonder, some of them no more easy to explain than the other kind of prodigy; but so long as you have science with you, whether you understand it or not, you are all right. I could not help

wondering, however, whether, if by chance I heard those steps in the long gallery outside my door, I should refer the matter comfortably to the science of acoustics. I was tormented, until I fell asleep, by a vague expectation of hearing them. I could not get them out of my mind or out of my ears, so distinct were they—the light step, soft but with energy in it, evidently a woman's step. I could not help recollecting, with a tingling sensation through all my veins, the distinctness of the turn it gave—the coming back, the steps going in a line opposite to ours. It seemed to me that from moment to moment I must hear it again in the gallery, and then how could it be explained?

Next day—for I slept very well after I had succeeded in getting to sleep, and what I had heard did not by any means haunt my dreams—next day I managed to elude all the pleasant occupations of the house, and, as soon as I could get free from observation, I took my way to the Lady's Walk. I had said that I had letters to write—a well-worn phrase, which of course means exactly what one pleases. I walked up and down the Lady's Walk, and could neither hear nor see anything. On this side of the shrubbery there was no possibility of any concealed path; on the other side the bank went sloping to the water's edge. The avenue ran along from the corner of the loch half-way round the green plateau on which the house was planted, and at the upper end came out upon the elevated ground behind the house; but no road crossed it, nor was there the slightest appearance of any mode by which a steady sound not its own could be communicated here. I examined it all with the utmost care, looking behind the bole of every tree as if the secret might be there, and my heart gave a leap when I perceived what seemed to me one narrow track worn along the ground. Fancy plays us curious pranks even when she is most on her guard. It was a strange idea that I, who had come here with the purpose of finding a way of explaining the curious phenomenon upon which so long and lasting a superstition had been built, should be so quickly infected by it. I saw the little track, quite narrow but very distinct, and though of course I did not believe in the Lady of Ellermore, yet within myself I jumped at the certainty that this was her track. It gave me a curious sensation. The certainty lay underneath the scepticism as if they were two things which had no connection with each other. Had anyone seen me it must have been supposed that I was looking for something among the bushes, so closely did I scrutinise every foot of the soil and every tree.

It exercised a fascination upon me which I could not resist. The Psychical Society did not exist in those days, so far as I know, but there are many minds outside that inquisitive body to whom the authentication of a ghost story, or, to speak more practically, the clearing up of a superstition, is very attractive. I managed to elude the family arrangements once more at the same hour at which Miss Campbell and I had visited the Lady's Walk on the previous evening. It was a lovely evening, soft and warm, the western sky all ablaze with colour, the great branches of the beeches thrown out in dark maturity of greenness upon the flush of orange and crimson melting into celestial rosy red as it rose higher, and flinging itself in airy masses rose-tinted across the serene blue above. The same wonderful colours glowed in reflection out of the loch. The air was of magical clearness, and earth and sky seemed stilled with an almost awe of their own loveliness, happiness, and peace.

The holy time was quiet as a nun,
Breathless with adoration.

For my part, however, I noticed this only in passing, being intent on other thoughts. From the loch there came a soft tumult of voices. It was Saturday evening, and all the boys were at home. They were getting out the boats for an evening row, and the white sail of the toy yacht rose upon the gleaming water like a little white cloud among the rosy clouds of that resplendent sky. I stood between two of the beeches that formed a sort of arch, and looked out upon them, distracted for an instant by the pleasant distant sound which came softly through the summer air. Next moment I turned sharply round with a start, in spite of myself—turned quickly to see who it was coming after me. There was, I need not say, not a soul within sight. The beech leaves fluttered softly in the warm air; the long shadows of their great boles lay unbroken along the path; nothing else was visible, not even a bird on a bough. I stood breathless between the two trees, with my back turned to the loch, gazing at nothing, while the soft footsteps came quietly on, and crossed me—passed me! with a slight waft of air, I thought, such as a slight figure might have made; but that was imagination perhaps. Imagination! was it not all imagination? or what was it? No shadows or darkness to conceal a passing form by; full light of day radiant with colour; the most living delightful air, all sweet with pleasure. I stood there speechless and without power

to move. They went along softly, without changing the gentle regularity of the tread, to the end of the walk, growing fainter as they went further and further from me. I never listened so intently in my life. I said to myself, 'If they go out of hearing I shall know it is merely an excited imagination.' And on they went, almost out of hearing, only the faintest touch upon the ground; then there was a momentary pause, and my heart stood still, but leaped again to my throat and sent wild waves of throbbing to my ears next moment: they had turned and were coming back.

I cannot describe the extraordinary effect. If it had been dark it would have been altogether different. The brightness, the life around, the absence of all that one associates with the supernatural, produced a thrill of emotion to which I can give no name. It was not fear; yet my heart beat as it had never in any dangerous emergency (and I have passed through some that were exciting enough) beat before. It was simple excitement, I suppose; and in the commotion of my mind I instinctively changed the pronoun which I had hitherto used, and asked myself, would *she* come back? She did, passing me once more, with the same movement of the air (or so I thought). But by that time my pulses were all clanging in my ears, and perhaps the sense itself became confused with listening. I turned and walked precipitately away, descending the little slope and losing myself in the shrubberies which were beneath the range of the low sun, now almost set, and felt dank and cold in the contrast. It was something like plunging into a bath of cold air after the warmth and glory above.

It was in this way that my first experience ended. Miss Campbell looked at me a little curiously with a half-smile when I joined the party at the lochside. She divined where I had been, and perhaps something of the agitation I felt, but she took no further notice; and as I was in time to find a place in the boat, where she had established herself with the children, I lost nothing by my meeting with the mysterious passenger in the Lady's Walk.

I did not go near the place for some days afterwards, but I cannot say that it was ever long out of my thoughts. I had long arguments with myself on the subject, representing to myself that I had heard the sound before hearing the superstition, and then had found no difficulty in believing that it was the sound of some passenger on an adjacent path, perhaps invisible from the Walk. I had not been able to find that path, but still it might exist at some angle which, according to the natural law of the transmission of sounds—Bah! what jargon this was! Had I

not heard *her* turn, felt her pass me, watched her coming back? And then I paused with a loud burst of laughter at myself. 'Ass! you never had any of these sensations before you heard the story,' I said. And that was true; but I heard the steps before I heard the story; and, now I think of it, was much startled by them, and set my mind to work to account for them, as you know. 'And what evidence have you that the first interpretation was not the right one?' myself asked me with scorn; upon which question I turned my back with a hopeless contempt of the pertinacity of that other person who has always so many objections to make. Interpretation! could any interpretation ever do away with the effect upon my actual senses of that invisible passer-by? But the most disagreeable effect was this, that I could not shut out from my mind the expectation of hearing those same steps in the gallery outside my door at night. It was a long gallery running the full length of the wing, highly polished and somewhat slippery, a place in which any sound was important. I never went along to my room without a feeling that at any moment I might hear those steps behind me, or after I had closed my door might be conscious of them passing. I never did so, but neither have I ever got free of the thought.

A few days after, however, another incident occurred that drove the Lady's Walk and its invisible visitor out of my mind. We were all returning home in the long northern twilight from a mountain expedition. How it was that I was the last to return I do not exactly recollect. I think Miss Campbell had forgotten to give some directions to the coachman's wife at the lodge, which I volunteered to carry for her. My nearest way back would have been through the Lady's Walk, had not some sort of doubtful feeling restrained me from taking it. Though I have said and felt that the effect of these mysterious footsteps was enhanced by the full daylight, still I had a sort of natural reluctance to put myself in the way of encountering them when the darkness began to fall. I preferred the shrubberies, though they were darker and less attractive. As I came out of their shade, however, some one whom I had never seen before—a lady—met me, coming apparently from the house. It was almost dark, and what little light there was was behind her, so that I could not distinguish her features. She was tall and slight, and wrapped apparently in a long cloak, a dress usual enough in those rainy regions. I think, too, that her veil was over her face. The way in which she approached made it apparent that she was going to speak to

me, which surprised me a little, though there was nothing extraordinary in it, for of course by this time all the neighbourhood knew who I was and that I was a visitor at Ellermore. There was a little air of timidity and hesitation about her as she came forward, from which I supposed that my sudden appearance startled her a little, and yet was welcome as an unexpected way of getting something done that she wanted. *Tant de choses en un mot*, you will say—nay, without a word—and yet it was quite true. She came up to me quickly as soon as she had made up her mind. Her voice was very soft, but very peculiar, with a sort of far-away sound as if the veil or evening air interposed a visionary distance between her and me. ‘If you are a friend to the Campbells,’ she said, ‘will you tell them——’ then paused a little and seemed to look at me with eyes that shone dimly through the shadows like stars in a misty sky.

‘I am a warm friend to the Campbells; I am living there,’ I said.

‘Will you tell them—the father and Charlotte—that Colin is in great trouble and temptation, and that if they would save him they should lose no time?’

‘Colin!’ I said, startled; then, after a moment, ‘Pardon me, this is an uncomfortable message to entrust to a stranger. Is he ill? I am very sorry, but don’t let me make them anxious without reason. What is the matter? He was all right when they last heard——’

‘It is not without reason,’ she said; ‘I must not say more. Tell them just this—in great trouble and temptation. They may perhaps save him yet if they lose no time.’

‘But stop,’ I said, for she seemed about to pass on. ‘If I am to say this there must be something more. May I ask who it is that sends the message? They will ask me, of course. And what is wrong?’

She seemed to wring her hands under her cloak, and looked at me with an attitude and gesture of supplication. ‘In great trouble,’ she said, ‘in great trouble! and tempted beyond his strength. And not such as I can help. Tell them, if you wish well to the Campbells. I must not say more.’

And, notwithstanding all that I could say, she left me so, with a wave of her hand, disappearing among the dark bushes. It may be supposed that this was no agreeable charge to give to a guest, one who owed nothing but pleasure and kindness to the Campbells, but had no acquaintance beyond the surface with

their concerns. They were, it is true, very free in speech, and seemed to have as little *dessous des cartes* in their life and affairs as could be imagined. But Colin was the one who was spoken of less freely than any other in the family. He had been expected several times since I came, but had never appeared. It seemed that he had a way of postponing his arrival, and 'of course,' it was said in the family, never came when he was expected. I had wondered more than once at the testy tone in which the old gentleman spoke of him sometimes, and the line of covert defence always adopted by Charlotte. To be sure he was the eldest, and might naturally assume a more entire independence of action than the other young men, who were yet scarcely beyond the time of pupilage and in their father's house.

But from this as well as from the still more natural and apparent reason that to bring them bad news of any kind was most disagreeable and inappropriate on my part, the commission I had so strangely received hung very heavily upon me. I turned it over in my mind as I dressed for dinner (we had been out all day, and dinner was much later than usual in consequence) with great perplexity and distress. Was I bound to give a message forced upon me in such a way? If the lady had news of any importance to give, why did she turn away from the house, where she could have communicated it at once, and confide it to a stranger? On the other hand, should I be justified in keeping back anything that might be of so much importance to them? It might perhaps be something for which she did not wish to give her authority. Sometimes people in such circumstances will even condescend to write an anonymous letter to give the warning they think necessary, without betraying to the victims of misfortune that anyone whom they know is acquainted with it. Here was a justification for the strange step she had taken. It might be done in the utmost kindness to them, if not to me; and what if there might be some real danger afloat and Colin be in peril, as she said? I thought over these things anxiously before I went downstairs, but even to the moment of entering that bright and genial drawing-room, so full of animated faces and cheerful talk, I had not made up my mind what I should do. When we returned to it after dinner I was still uncertain. It was late, and the children had been sent to bed. The boys went round to the stables to see that the horses were not the worse for their day's work. Mr. Campbell retired to his library. For a little while I was left alone, a thing that very rarely happened. Presently Miss Campbell came downstairs from

the children's rooms, with that air about her of rest and sweetness, like a reflection of the little prayers she has been hearing and the infant repose which she has left, which hangs about a young mother when she has disposed her babies to sleep. Charlotte, by her right of being no mother, but only a voluntary mother by deputy, had a still more tender light about her in the sweetness of this duty which God and her goodwill, not simple nature, had put upon her. She came softly into the room with her shining countenance. 'Are you alone, Mr. Temple?' she said with a little surprise. 'How rude of those boys to leave you,' and came and drew her chair towards the table where I was, in the kindness of her heart.

'I am very glad they have left me if I may have a little talk with you,' I said; and then before I knew I had told her. She was the kind of woman to whom it is a relief to tell whatever may be on your heart. The fact that my commission was to her, had really less force with me in telling it, than the ease to myself. She, however, was very much surprised and disturbed. 'Colin in trouble? Oh, that might very well be,' she said, then stopped herself. 'You are his friend,' she said; 'you will not misunderstand me, Mr. Temple. He is very independent, and not so open as the rest of us. That is nothing against him. We are all rather given to talking; we keep nothing to ourselves—except Colin. And then he is more away than the rest.' The first necessity in her mind seemed to be this, of defending the absent. Then came the question, From whom could the warning be? Charley came in at this moment, and she called him to her eagerly. 'Here is a very strange thing happened. Somebody came up to Mr. Temple in the shrubbery and told him to tell us that Colin was in trouble.'

'Colin!' I could see that Charley was, as Charlotte had been, more distressed than surprised. 'When did you hear from him last?' he said.

'On Monday; but the strange thing is, who could it be that sent such a message? You said a lady, Mr. Temple?'

'What like was she?' said Charley.

Then I described as well as I could. 'She was tall and very slight; wrapped up in a cloak, so that I could not make out much, and her veil down. And it was almost dark.'

'It is clear she did not want to be recognised,' Charley said.

'There was something peculiar about her voice, but I really cannot describe it, a strange tone unlike anything——'

'Marion Gray has a peculiar voice; she is tall and slight. But what could she know about Colin?'

'I will tell you who is more likely,' cried Charley, 'and that is Susie Cameron. Her brother is in London now; they may have heard from him.'

'Oh! Heaven forbid! oh! Heaven forbid! the Camerons of all people!' Charlotte cried, wringing her hands. The action struck me as so like that of the veiled stranger that it gave me a curious shock. I had not time to follow out the vague, strange suggestion that it seemed to breathe into my mind, but the sensation was as if I had suddenly, groping, come upon some one in the dark.

'Whoever it was,' I said, 'she was not indifferent, but full of concern and interest——'

'Susie would be that,' Charley said, looking significantly at his sister, who rose from her chair in great distress.

'I would telegraph to him at once,' she said, 'but it is too late to-night.'

'And what good would it do to telegraph? If he is in trouble it would be no help to him.'

'But what can I do? what else can I do?' she cried. I had plunged them into sudden misery, and could only look on now as an anxious but helpless spectator, feeling at the same time as if I had intruded myself upon a family affliction: for it was evident that they were not at all unprepared for 'trouble' to Colin. I felt my position very embarrassing, and rose to go away.

'I feel miserably guilty,' I said, 'as if I had been the bearer of bad news; but I am sure you will believe that I would not for anything in the world intrude upon——'

Charlotte paused to give me a pale sort of smile, and pointed to the chair I had left. 'No, no,' she said, 'don't go away, Mr. Temple. We do not conceal from you that we are anxious—that we were anxious even before—but don't go away. I don't think I will tell my father, Charley. It would break his rest. Let him have his night's rest whatever happens; and there is nothing to be done to-night——'

'We will see what the post brings to-morrow,' Charley said.

And then the consultation ended abruptly by the sudden entrance of the boys, bringing a gust of fresh night air with them. The horses were not a preen the worse though they had been out all day; even old grumbling Geordie, the coachman, had not a word to say. 'You may have them again to-morrow, Chatty, if you like,' said Tom. She had sat down to her work, and met their

eyes with an unruffled countenance. 'I hope I am not so unreasonable,' she said with her tranquil looks; only I could see a little tremor in her hand as she stooped over the socks she was knitting. She laid down her work after a while, and went to the piano and played accompaniments, while first Jack and then Tom sang. She did it without any appearance of effort, yielding to all the wishes of the youngsters, while I looked on wondering, How can women do this sort of thing? It is more than one can divine.

Next morning Mr. Campbell asked 'by the bye,' but with a pucker in his forehead, which, being now enlightened on the subject, I could understand, if there was any letter from Colin? 'No,' Charlotte said (who for her part had turned over all her letters with a swift, anxious scrutiny). 'But that is nothing,' she said, 'for we heard on Monday.' The old gentleman uttered an 'Umph!' of displeasure. 'Tell him I think it a great want in manners that he is not here to receive Mr. Temple.' 'Oh, father, Mr. Temple understands,' cried Charlotte; and she turned upon me those mild eyes, in which there was now a look that went to my heart, an appeal at once to my sympathy and my forbearance, bidding me not to ask, not to speak, yet to feel with her all the same. If she could have known the rush of answering feeling with which my heart replied! but I had to be careful not even to *look* too much knowledge, too much sympathy.

After this two days passed without any incident. What letters were sent, or other communications, to Colin I could not tell. They were great people for the telegraph and flashed messages about continually. There was a telegraph station in the little village, which had been very surprising to me at first, but I no longer wondered, seeing their perpetual use of it. People who have to do with business, with great 'works' to manage, get into the way more easily than we others. But either no answer or nothing of a satisfactory character was obtained, for I was told no more. The second evening was Sunday, and I was returning alone from a ramble down the glen. It was Mr. Campbell's custom to read a sermon on Sunday evenings to his household, and as I had, in conformity to the custom of the family, already heard two, I had deserted on this occasion, and chosen the freedom and quiet of a rural walk instead. It was a cloudy evening, and there had been rain. The clouds hung low on the hills, and half the surrounding peaks had retired altogether into the mist. I had scarcely set foot within the gates when I met once more the lady

whose message had brought so much pain. The trees arched over the approach at this spot, and even in full daylight it was in deep shade. Now in the evening dimness it was dark as night. I could see little more than the slim straight figure, the sudden perception of which gave me—I could scarcely tell why—a curious thrill of something like fear. She came hurriedly towards me, an outline, nothing more, until the same peculiar voice, sweet but shrill, broke the silence. ‘Did you tell them?’ she said.

It cost me an effort to reply calmly. My heart had begun to beat with an excitement over which I had no control, like a horse that takes fright at something which its rider cannot see. I said, ‘Yes, I told them,’ straining my eyes, yet feeling as if my faculties were restive like that same horse and would not obey me, would not look or examine her appearance as I desired. But indeed it would have been in vain, for it was too dark to see.

‘But nothing has been done,’ she said. ‘Did they think I would come for nothing?’ And there was again that movement, the same as I had seen in Charlotte, of wringing her hands.

‘Pardon me,’ I said, ‘but if you will tell me who you are? I am a stranger here; no doubt if you would see Miss Campbell herself, or if she knew who it was——’

I felt the words somehow arrested in my throat, I could not tell why; and she drew back from me with a sudden movement. It is hard to characterise a gesture in the dark, but there seemed to be a motion of impatience and despair in it. ‘Tell them again Colin wants them. He is in sore trouble, trouble that is nigh death.’

‘I will carry your message; but for God’s sake if it is so important tell me who sends it,’ I said.

She shook her head and went rapidly past me, notwithstanding the anxious appeals that I tried to make. She seemed to put out a hand to wave me back as I stood gazing after her. Just then the lodge door opened. I suppose the woman within had been disturbed by the sound of the voices, and a gleam of fire-light burst out upon the road. Across this gleam I saw the slight figure pass quickly, and then a capacious form with a white apron came out and stood in the door. The sight of the coachman’s wife in her large and comfortable proportions gave me a certain ease, I cannot tell why. I hurried up to her. ‘Who was that that passed just now?’ I asked.

‘That passed just now? There was naeboddy passed. I thought I heard a voice, and that it was maybe Geordie; but nobody has passed here that I could see.’

'Nonsense! you must have seen her,' I cried hastily; 'she cannot be out of sight yet. No doubt you would know who she was—a lady tall and slight—in a cloak——'

'Eh, sir, ye maun be joking,' cried the woman. 'What lady, if it werna Miss Charlotte, would be walking here at this time of the night? Lady! it might be, maybe, the schoolmaster's daughter. She has one of those ulsters like her betters. But nobody has passed here this hour back; o' that I'm confident,' she said.

'Why did you come out, then, just at this moment?' I cried. The woman contemplated me in the gleam from the fire from top to toe. 'You're the English gentleman that's biding up at the house?' she said. 'Deed, I just heard a step, that was nae doubt your step, and I thought it might be my man; but there has naebody, far less a lady, whatever she had on, passed my door coming or going. Is that you, Geordie?' she cried suddenly as a step became audible approaching the gate from the outer side.

'Ay, it's just me,' responded her husband out of the gloom.

'Have ye met a lady as ye came along? The gentleman here will have it that there's been a lady passing the gate, and there's been no lady. I would have seen her through the window even if I hadna opened the door.'

'I've seen no lady,' said Geordie, letting himself in with considerable noise at the foot entrance, which I now remembered to have closed behind me when I passed through it a few minutes before. 'I've met no person; it's no an hour for ladies to be about the roads on Sabbath day at e'en.'

It was not till this moment that a strange fancy, which I will explain hereafter, darted into my mind. How it came I cannot tell. I was not the sort of man, I said to myself, for any such folly. My imagination had been a little touched, to be sure, by that curious affair of the footsteps; but this, which seemed to make my heart stand still and sent a shiver through me, was very different, and it was a folly not to be entertained for a moment. I stamped my foot upon it instantly, crushing it on the threshold of the mind. 'Apparently either you or I must be mistaken,' I said with a laugh at the high tone of Geordie, who himself had evidently been employed in a jovial way—quite consistent, according to all I had heard, with very fine principles in respect to the Sabbath. I had a laugh over this as I went away, insisting upon the joke to myself as I hurried up the avenue. It was extremely funny, I said to myself; it would be a capital story among my other Scotch experiences. But somehow my laugh died away in a very feeble sort of

quaver. The night had grown dark even when I emerged from under the trees, by reason of a great cloud, full of rain, which had rolled up over the sky, quenching it out. I was very glad to see the lights of the house gleaming steadily before me. The blind had not been drawn over the end window of the drawing-room, and from the darkness without I looked in upon a scene which was full of warmth and household calm. Though it was August there was a little glimmer of fire. The reading of the sermon was over. Old Mr. Campbell still sat at a little table with the book before him, but it was closed. Charlotte in the foreground, with little Harry and Mary on either side of her, was 'hearing their Paraphrase.'¹ The boys were putting a clever dog through his tricks in a sort of clandestine way behind backs, at whom Charlotte would shake a finger now and then with an admonitory smiling look. Charley was reading or writing at the end of the room. The soft little chime of the children's voices, the suppressed laughter and whispering of the boys, the father's leisurely remark now and then, made up a soft murmur of sound which was like the very breath of quietude and peace. How did I dare, their favoured guest, indebted so deeply as I was to their kindness, to go in among them with that mysterious message and disturb their tranquillity once more?

When I went into the drawing-room, which was not till an hour later, Charlotte looked up at me smiling with some playful remark as to my flight from the evening reading. But as she caught my eye her countenance changed. She put down her book, and after a little consideration walked to that end window through which I had looked, and which was in a deep recess, making me a little sign to follow her. 'How dark the night is,' she said with a little pretence of looking out; and then in a hurried under-tone, 'Mr. Temple, you have heard something more?'

'Not anything more, but certainly the same thing repeated. I have seen the lady again.'

'And who is she? Tell me frankly, Mr. Temple. Just the same thing—that Colin is in trouble? no details? I cannot imagine who can take so much interest. But you asked her for her name?'

'I asked her, but she gave me no reply. She waved her hand and went on. I begged her to see you, and not to give me such a commission; but it was of no use. I don't know if I ought to

¹ The Paraphrases are a selection of hymns always printed along with the metrical version of the Psalms in use in Scotland, and more easy, being more modern in diction, to be learnt by heart.

trouble you with a vague warning that only seems intended to give pain.'

'Oh yes,' she cried, 'oh yes, it was right to tell me. If I only knew who it was! Perhaps you can describe her better, since you have seen her a second time. But Colin has friends—whom we don't know. Oh, Mr. Temple, it is making a great claim upon your kindness, but could not you have followed her and found out who she was?'

'I might have done that,' I said. 'To tell the truth, it was so instantaneous and I was—startled.'

She looked up at me quickly with a questioning air, and grew a little pale, gazing at me; but whether she comprehended the strange wild fancy which I could not even permit myself to realise I cannot tell; for Charley seeing us standing together, and being in a state of nervous anxiety also, here came and joined us, and we stood talking together in an under tone till Mr. Campbell called to know if anything was the matter. 'You are laying your heads together like a set of conspirators,' said the old gentleman with a half-laugh. His manner to me was always benign and gracious; but now that I knew something of the family troubles I could perceive a vein of suppressed irritation, a certain watchfulness which made him alarming to the other members of the household. Charlotte gave us both a warning look. 'I will tell him to-morrow—I will delay no longer—but not to-night,' she said. 'Mr. Temple was telling us about his ramble, father. He has just come in in time to avoid the rain.'

'Well,' said the old man, 'he cannot expect to be free from rain up here in the Highlands. It is wonderful the weather we have had.' And with this the conversation fell into an easy domestic channel. Miss Campbell this time could not put away the look of excitement and agitation in her eyes. But she escaped with the children to see them put to bed, and we sat and talked of politics and other mundane subjects. The boys were all going to leave Ellermore next day—Tom and Jack for the 'works,' Charley upon some other business. Mr. Campbell made me formal apologies for them. 'I had hoped Colin would have been at home by this time to do the honours of the Highlands: but we expect him daily,' he said. He kept his eye fixed upon me as if to give emphasis to his words and defy any doubt that might arise in my mind.

Next morning I was summoned by Charley before I came downstairs to 'come quickly and speak to my father.' I found him in the library, which opened from the dining-room. He was walking about

the room in great agitation. He began to address me almost before I was in sight. 'Who is this, sir, that you have been having meetings with about Colin? some insidious gossip or other that has taken ye in. I need not tell you, Mr. Temple, a lawyer and an Englishman, that an anonymous statement——' For once the old gentleman had forgotten himself, his respect for his guest, his fine manners. He was irritated, obstinate, wounded in pride and feeling. Charlotte touched him on the arm with a murmured appeal, and turned her eyes to me in anxious deprecation. But there was no thought further from my mind than that of taking offence.

'I fully feel it,' I said; 'nor was it my part to bring any disagreeable suggestion into this house—if it had not been that my own mind was so burdened with it and Miss Campbell so clear-sighted.'

He cast a look at her, half affectionate, half displeased, and then he said to me testily, 'But who was the woman? That is the question; that is what I want to know.'

My eyes met Charlotte's as I looked up. She had grown very pale, and was gazing at me eagerly, as if she had divined somehow the wild fancy which once more shot across my mind against all reason and without any volition of mine.

(To be continued.)





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'THE TIMES,' August 13, 1877.

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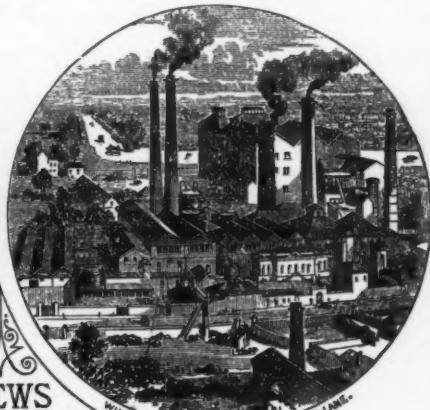
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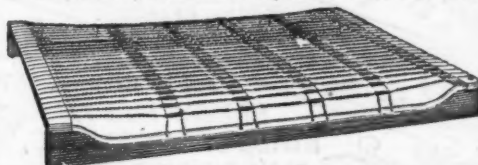
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